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After Le Pen

AN END TO TOLERANCE

'The English are much more racist than the French'

Sir Alfred Sherman

Cover illustration: David Sim

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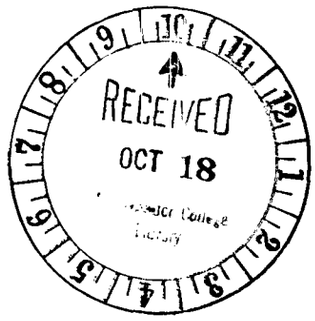

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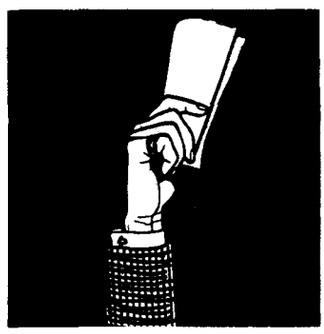
Third-term Thatcherism: on the eve of the Conservative Party conference, we look at a new parliament, the agenda and its enemies within. *Plus* Christopher Hitchens, Edward Pearce, Elgy Gillespie

The end of excuses review



THE POLICY REVIEW to which the Labour Party is now committed — following a less than classic debate on Monday — is the most important measure of the conference in Brighton. Or could be.

The first truth to which it will have to address itself is that there are no truths. Labour does not now possess a range of policies, or ideas on policies, which can support a successful bid for government whenever that is to be made. The review starts with a clean sheet.

To be sure, it starts with some principles. A commitment to greater equality in society is perhaps the root one of these. But for now, there is little point in going beyond that, and in trying to set down markers on what should or should not constitute an unshakeable pledge. The most important single component Labour's leaders and thinkers can bring to this long overdue process is intellectual curiosity and freedom under the guidance of political imperative.

They must be free, for example, to examine the position of the unions — both in their relation to the party and, more importantly, in their role in late 20th century society. In the latter context, Labour has to ask how far it will be able again to promote a corporatist model of society in which the unions are bargaining partners with government and business — a role which neither unions nor business could possibly now undertake with any hope of success. If full-blooded corporatism is impossible, at what level can there be a colloquy between the social partners — and what rights and responsibilities should each side realistically expect the other to have and to take?

The interlinking of unions and party through the block vote is no longer rationally defensible. A strong connection will and should continue to exist; but it has to be a relationship in which the two parts of the movement operate autonomously. A disengagement from each other, which will be slow, should be replaced by a concomitant increase in the party's mass membership through *real* participation in it by some of the trade unionists whose phantoms are presently shunted about in blocks of hundreds of thousands; and the plan described by Gordon Brown MP in our political column (p9) appears a good early stab at doing just that. The principle of one person one vote is one which has to sweep through Labour; to be sure, it has already been pioneered by the SDP, but it has been tarnished in its hands by David Owen's refusal to be bound by the first result which ran against his interests.

The review would also have to look at industrial policy; it would have to determine how and where it could intervene to exercise leverage over transnational corporations and international capital flows: how much it could do itself, how far it could benefit from co-ordinated action through the EEC, a body it has neglected. It would have to consult industrialists and analysts on the true state of British industry, and discover what it really needed in the way of credit, research and development and a more highly-skilled and educated workforce.

The policy reviewers would, critically, have to examine the role and scope of public provision: the most important element in seeking to establish greater equality. Labour has the opportunity to revive and re-energise the concept of public service; but if it is to argue that public provision should be universal in such areas as education, health and social services, it must present the electorate with the convincing picture of a party which will stop at nothing to bring the people, especially the neediest people, the most efficient service possible. It is impossible to be the party which protects traditional working practices and at the same time be the party of public provision.

In foreign affairs, and crucially in defence, the reviewers must now give pride of place to the world as it is and is likely to become. We may well be seeing the emergence of a new period of co-operation between the main powers, an era which owes much to the continuing success of Mikhail Gorbachev. The tentative agreements on the Gulf crisis (see Dilip Hiro p18) between the US and the Soviet Union owe much to the fact that Iran is disliked by both: but for all that, it highlights the possibility of dialogue, already extant in the preparations for a treaty on intermediate missiles.

Britain's place in this scheme of things is both important and modest: important because it is a major player in the NATO bloc whose continued coherence and stability is important if it is to be a convincing and successful bargaining partner with the Soviet Union, modest because the reduced power of the UK means that a grand unilateralist gesture cannot stimulate emulation, though it can cause disturbance. We have the best chance for 15 years of a reduction in nuclear arsenals, and in world tension; sincere unilateralists and multilateralists can find some agreement in encouraging the process: down that way must lie the future stance of Labour on defence.

Finally, the review would have to come back to the starting question: what are we here for? It might decide not to answer that too precisely: that such previous answers as that Labour is 'a broad social movement on behalf of the underdog' have something to recommend them — because they will the ends without specifying the means.

John Lloyd

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DIARY

Brighton

Delegates arrived in Brighton on Sunday clutching their *Observer* colour supplement feature on him and his dog, bumped into him trotting trimly towards the television studios, and then, no matter which fringe meetings they went to, there he was again. This was the Cult of Bryan Gould's Personality Rally. Even at fringe meetings where he wasn't actually speaking, he was there, being invoked, summoned up to be disagreed with. The dividing line was not so much between left and right, but between Gould and not-Gould.

○

Disagreements arose on unexpected issues (as well as the expected ones, like share issues). Diane Abbott, for example, didn't like Westminster council's housing policy. 'Westminster is designating half the housing stock for sale and buying up land in Dagenham and beyond the M25 for prefab housing for the homeless,' she alleged (see Peter Bradley, p6). But Gould must be delighted: this sort of thing could save his dwindling majority in his Dagenham constituency.

○

She and Gould were speaking at the 'soft' left Labour Co-ordinating Committee rally, at which everyone from Ken Livingstone to Bill Morris of the transport workers union agreed that there must be a thoroughgoing review of party policy. Nothing was excluded. Except . . . With Diane Abbott it was public housing ('Let nobody tell *you* that there are intrinsic advantages to home ownership'). With Joan Ruddock it was a non-nuclear defence policy. 'Did it lose us the election?' she unwisely and rhetorically asked. 'No, but it helped,' was muttered *sotto voce*. With Robin Cook it was public sector borrowing ('The Labour Party is in danger of becoming less radical than William Pitt the Younger').

○

At least Robin Cook was witty. So much so in fact that the television cameras, who had switched off their lights and started to go, switched them back on and resumed filming — the ultimate accolade in today's Labour Party. But this year's fringe was funnier than usual: perhaps it was gallows humour. Often it was Galloway humour .

Political movement seemed freer. Paul Thompson, chairing the Labour Co-ordinating Committee meeting, formally welcomed Bernie Grant and Linda Bellos (former and current leaders of Haringey and Lambeth councils) 'to the ranks of traitors to the working class'.

○

Even the working class' self-declared loyalists deployed humour to good effect at their dwindling and divided fringe meetings. Unlike most of the 'hard' left's speakers, Labour *Briefing*'s Keith Veness was intentionally funny. He is Jeremy Corbyn MP's agent, NUPE shop steward in Hackney and an undiscovered stand-up comic. He poked fun wickedly at Margaret Hodge, newly pragmatist leader of Islington council, for her injunction to Labour councils not to promise what they can't deliver. This meant Labour canvassers telling council tenants: 'Yes, your roof is leaking. We can't do anything about it, but have you considered voting for us?'

○

In the old days, fringe meetings were the test-beds of betrayal and rehabilitation, where the untruth of charges against the betrayer was no defence and rehabilitation only possible by unconditional subscription to the catechism. Betrayal of rival catechisms has become so common that it has mostly lost its sting, but there were dying kicks of it this week, as when Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North, got an enthusiastic round of applause for his ringing declaration that 'I for one am not prepared to sell the soul of the Labour Party to the Stock Exchange by letting them have a stand at conference'. The Stock Exchange doesn't have a stand at the conference centre.

○

The vitriol of the 'hard' left has degenerated into an obsession with urine. Victimised miner Paul Whetton told the *Briefing* meeting that he had difficulty knocking on people's doors, when he was told: "'Politicians are all the same. You all piss in the same pot." And we have to argue with them, when we know in our heart of hearts that he's right.' The conference issue of *Briefing* newspaper also features a photomontage of Neil Kinnock pissing on the Labour Manifesto. If Lenin were alive today, perhaps he would be writing *'Left-Wing' Socialism: A Lavatorial Disorder.*

○

The relative dullness both in and out of the conference hall may have had something to do with the process of reflection. The Fabian meetings, on late at night, were well attended and judicious affairs: at the first of them, on Saturday night, senior Liberal Richard Holme, an adviser to David Steel, could proceed un-booed after a remark like: 'As a Liberal, I believe Labour is in long-term secular decline'. No one even pointed out to Holme that, as a Liberal, he was presently in a party in the steepest of short-term declines in the polls.

Holme offered Labour 'competitive co-existence — competing for the voters' support in an open electoral market and co-existing within a shared democratic system, which puts the citizen in ultimate control. That can only be achieved by electoral reform.'

Behind that phrase is a recognition on the Liberals' part that a deal with Labour on anything but PR is a non-starter, at least for now. That is ultimately not a matter of principle on either side: simply a recognition that the logic of two parties competing as hard as they are, or will be, for the centre ground will not allow of simultaneous compact. But come 1991, and a political terrain similar to today? A rejection of a pact of some kind *then* might seem more like massive indulgence than either misfortune or carelessness.

○

Rhetorical dullness is complemented by a new daring to be fashionable. Double-breasted suits have spread outwards and upwards from Derek Hatton. Jack Cunningham wears one. Roy Hattersley has a splendid one. Peter Mandelson has always worn one. The single button straining to keep at bay the beer gut is under sustained ideological disapproval.

○

Further. On Monday night, in the early hours of the morning, a senior trade union official from the Transport and General Workers Union *ordered — and drank — a Perrier water*. Jack Dromey (for it was he) compounded the horror by being seen in the company of his wife, the determined Harriet Harman MP. Heresy knew no bounds when he addressed her, with every show of affection. This is not the Labour Party I joined.

John Rentoul and John Lloyd

ROGER WODDIS

The Gospel of John Moore

'Everyone knows the sullen apathy of dependence and can compare it with the sheer delight of personal achievement.' — John Moore, Social Services Secretary, in a speech to a Conservative Political Centre conference.

Not a howl was heard from a strangled throat,
As he called for compassion's removal;
Not a scheme to scuttle the welfare boat
But was greeted with nodding approval.

He shed no tear for the widow's mite,
For children he had no pity;
If the old went short, it served them right
For not buying shares in the City.

He said he thought the show they ran
Was flowing with milk and honey,
And a lifebelt thrown to a drowning man
An extravagant waste of money.

The spirit of social care was dead,
Its loss a happy bereavement;
The Devil who takes the hindmost, he said,
Knew the sheer delight of achievement.

This was a time for making hay,
Not feeding the beast that is driven;
From him that hath not shall be taken away,
And to him that hath shall be given.

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The stone rolling on War on Want

War on Want's annual meeting was closed to the press. This is the first report on an important event for the labour movement.

IN THE MIDST of the tense and troubled annual meeting of War on Want at the University of Sussex last weekend George Galloway, the outgoing General Secretary and Labour MP, spoke movingly of the need for reconciliation. He told of talking the previous night to an unnamed left politician from Central America who had warned of the dangers that ensue when comrades tear themselves apart: 'The stone that is set rolling at the top of the hill crushes everyone.'

Well, in War on Want that stone is still rolling. Two days of debate revealed that the Third World charity remains savagely divided. A substantial block of the staff feel intimidated, oppressed and demoralised.

Simon Fanshawe, the chair, conducted the annual meeting coolly and fairly; he managed to quieten attempts to hiss speakers, and constantly urged people to control their anger. Even so, on one occasion a man had to be physically restrained by friends as he strode forward shouting and gesticulating at a speaker. Several people were crying as they spoke and one woman — a staff member — was palpably in fear. Another woman entirely broke down because she felt herself to have been cruelly manipulated.

George Galloway's recently publicised personal life is quite irrelevant to the issues which divide the charity. Indeed, if on nothing else, the annual meeting was almost united in sympathy and anger over the distress that the press's intrusive interest caused Galloway and those close to him.

For Galloway and his allies, the divide is partially political, partially personal — and almost wholly attributable to the envy felt by what they see as an ineffective clique which has been pushed aside in the organisation's high-profile drive under Galloway for greater success and a larger membership, especially among trade unionists.

His opponents on the council of management and among the staff have taken the quite different view. For them there are three issues: first, the unresolved question about Galloway's expenses; second, his intolerance of opposition; and third, a concern for internal democracy which has implications for the entire labour movement. Jenny Pearce, an expert on Latin America and former council member, spoke of a 'bloc' of skilful politicians belonging to a particular political tradition: 'The machine has taken over War on Want, not democracy.'

The most compelling testimony was that of several staff members who had decided at last to break a self-imposed silence. John Denham, the campaigns organiser, said: 'The best and most committed people I've ever worked with have been subjected to intimidation, abuse and vilification . . . on a scale which is absolutely unbelievable.' So far as I understand it, the intimidation was verbal and psychological, leaving staff feeling insecure about their employment. He read out the terms of a vote of no confidence in Galloway, passed at a War on Want staff union meeting last year by 19 votes to 7, with 2 abstentions: 'We play by the book. It never got to the press.' Denham ended by saying, 'I don't know if I will get back in the front door of War on Want now.'

Shop steward Helen Allison said that for three years she has seen staff 'being demolished and undermined by management . . . and threatened from day to day. In the office, we have no democracy.' She complained that over half the staff were on short-term contracts — which plainly robs them of the security they need to play a full (i.e. on occasion possibly critical) role in the charity's affairs.

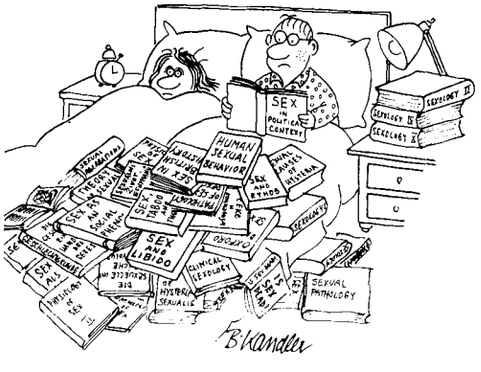
Both staff and dissident council members claimed that they had nothing personal against the former general secretary, but any criticism or opposition was regarded as 'downright treachery' or 'a vendetta' against Galloway. 'You are immediately denounced as a wrecker, as pernicious, as politically unsound or inept,' said a former council member, Hermione Harris, 'and described in the press as either ultra-right or ultra-left, or as "post-Maoist", whatever that means.'

The issues of democracy involved are complex and troubling. On the one hand, more than 400 trade union branches are affiliated to the charity which is beginning to develop a Union Aid fund which will enable workers to contribute up to £20 each year, tax-free, through a pay deduction scheme. On the other, the political contribution to War on Want of organised labour — and most notably from Galloway's native Scotland — has been to institutionalise Jenny Pearce's 'machine' in ways that will be familiar to people with experience of the politics of constituency Labour parties and internal trade union affairs.

In brief, Galloway's allies have taken advantage of their control of the new network of labour movement membership to mobilise crushing majorities for a slate which made a clean sweep of the War on Want Council. (Glenys Kinnock was on, but not of, the slate.) No dissidents survived, even though many of them have a history of commitment both to the charity and the Third World.

The way for this clean sweep was prepared at an extraordinary general meeting in Cardiff in February, which changed the rules to allow for the election of members on a simple majority. Previously, a transferable vote system ensured a diverse breadth of opinion.

Further, the Galloway factions' proxy votes enabled them to dominate the annual meeting. Here there are affinities with practice at the AGMs of commercial enterprises as well as with the use of trade union block votes. On Sunday afternoon up to 160 people were present, on a rough head count. Some 620 to 650 votes were being cast — which means that some 450 to 500 proxy votes were in play. Galloway's allies held the great majority of these. Six identifiable Galloway supporters had 188 votes between them — over 30 each on average.



Nothing of what I've described is unlawful or unconstitutional, but it hardly seems appropriate or wise conduct in a Third World charity, or in any other organisation, for that matter.

The new council bears a heavy responsibility for securing the future of War on Want. Several people at the meeting expressed fears that staff members who spoke out critically would be victimised. The council must make it clear that none of them will be harassed or victimised, and it should as a progressive employer remove the pall of insecurity under which short-time workers have been working — in several cases for two years or more. Second, the council appoints a new general secretary later this month. Its members must take great care to show they they are choosing Galloway's successor on her or his abilities and not on their position on the terrible rows which have been bearing the organisation apart.

Stuart Weir

The author is former editor of New Socialist.

What to do about Scotland?

WELL, THE GUV'NOR in No 10 has now made it perfectly clear how she intends responding to the Scottish general election result. Wave the Union Jack and carry on regardless! We are all part of her unitary state. Labour's Scottish victory and the virtual annihilation of the Scottish Tories are irrelevant.

The only Tory response so far is the quaint colonial idea of the Adam Smith Institute to set up an official Scottish residence for the prime minister! The received wisdom of the Tory Establishment is that Scotland rejected Thatcherism because we have not had enough of it. The assumption is that we Scots are too thick in the head to know what's good for us and another four or five years of the same medicine will make us really appreciate the benefits of Tory rule.

So what are we going to do about it? The general election result in Scotland and in Britain was predictable and predicted and it is an indictment of the Labour Party that no detailed contingency plan was prepared to deal with the situation in which we now find ourselves.

No doubt, some of the pussy-footed British nationalists will tell us that we have just got to accept the UK result and hang around for another half-decade in the hope that there will be a Labour government. Such a course of inaction would be a recipe for disaster.

An increasing number of young voters cannot remember such a thing as a Labour government and an increasing number of not-so-young voters must be wondering if they will ever see a Labour government again. Those of us who do not share that pessimism have a responsibility to set out a plan of action for a sustained campaign beginning now and aimed at an over-all Labour victory at the next general election.

Part of that strategy must be to build on our remaining strongholds. Labour has just won its greatest ever Scottish victory. The people of

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Scotland have given the Labour Party an unprecedented mandate and it is up to us to use that mandate now to try to deliver to the people of Scotland the policies for which they voted.

Seventy-six per cent of Scottish voters supported parties with a commitment to a Scottish Assembly with legislative and economic powers. In the Labour Party manifesto, the commitment was a key issue because it was to be the means of delivering to the people of Scotland many other socialist commitments in important areas such as housing, health, education, jobs and industry.

The Scottish Labour MPs have a Scottish Assembly Bill virtually ready for presentation to parliament. It would be naive to imagine that the present House of Commons is going to welcome our Bill. Nevertheless, the Bill can be a focus for a campaign, both in parliament and in the country.

If the government obstructs our Bill, then we should use every legitimate means at our disposal to obstruct government business, particularly its Scottish legislation for which it received no mandate from the people of Scotland. A determined group of 50 Scottish Labour MPs could make life very difficult for the government, but not if we simply stick to the cosy club conventions of Westminster. We ought to remember that our first loyalty is to our people.

Playing the orthodox Westminster opposition game has certainly not got us very far over the past eight years. We ought to resort to more guerrilla-type tactics to take the government by surprise. We must pressurise it and harass it at every available opportunity with the aim of making life so intolerable for it that it will be forced to think again.

Can we deliver anything? We are not in a position to make rash promises about that. The Tories seem to be playing a 'wait and see' game in the hope that, when the post-election dust settles, the rebellious Scots will touch the forelock and everything will return to normal.

On the other hand, the recently leaked document from the Scottish Tory party indicates that its opposition to devolution is not nearly as monolithic and intransigent as some of the public pronouncements of Thatcher and Rifkind indicate. Some grassroots Scottish Tories want devolution back on the agenda and Rifkind has never declared himself opposed in principle.

We must never underestimate the in-built resistance of the British constitution to any form of radical change. But if we don't stand up and fight, then we won't get anything at all.

Dennis Canavan

Dennis Canavan is Labour MP for Falkirk West.

Westminster: a tale of two cities

WESTMINSTER City Council is not rate-capped; its councillors are not surcharged. It is the richest borough in the country: a penny on the rates raises £3.275m.

Yet at 10,000 and growing, the council's housing waiting list is no shorter than that of hard-pressed Tower Hamlets. With 650 Westminister families homeless, the council has underspent its housing budget by £13m over the last two years. With 350 local families in bed and breakfast accommodation, Westminster is building no new council housing this year. And in this International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the controlling Conservative Group has just agreed a policy which will render hundreds more local families homeless within months.

Westminster last week designated almost half of its 23,000 council properties for sale. As a flat falls vacant, it is placed on the market. Tenants are offered £15,000 to leave, to speed the process of 'natural wastage'. The Tories say that they hope that Westminster's council tenants will benefit, but those who cannot raise a mortgage for the £50,000 average flat value need not apply; those with the most tenuous links with the borough — the offer of a job there suffices — may.

No sooner has the removal van cleared the street or the coffin crossed the hearth than the council sends in workers — workers it will not engage to carry out the basic repairs for which tenants may have waited for years — to seal the empty flat.

Already some 250 metal doors bar access to a home to those whom Westminster City Council has a statutory duty to house. The homeless will remain homeless; category A medical cases in urgent need will not be helped; severely overcrowded families, in some cases six to a bedroom, will not be rehoused; elderly people no longer able to climb the stairs will have to stay put; young people leaving their parents' home will no longer find accommodation in the community in which they grew up; couples starting a family will have to do so in a one-bedroom flat. Westminster's housing waiting list will simply grow longer and longer.

But that is not all. Not content with making themselves the single most significant cause of homelessness in Westminster, Tory councillors are now proposing to remove the borough's homeless — with or without their compliance — from the bed and breakfast hotels of Bayswater and Pimlico to accommodation as far away as Barking (where they are seeking planning consent to build a prefab shanty town on a wasteland site), Streatham, Heathrow, even Reading. City Hall is not seeking to solve its housing problems: it is simply recycling them. Westminster's is a tale of two cities: the rich get richer and the poor get moved out.

In the course of a radio phone-in, Peter Hartley, Westminster's chair of housing, recently told a young nurse born and raised in Paddington that on a salary of £6,000 she could not expect to live where she grew up. Like his counterpart in Wandsworth, who openly boasted that his housing policies were designed to transform the borough into a Conservative fiefdom — an objective which has already claimed a notable victim in Alf Dubs — Hartley has said that his policies will attract a 'new kind of tenant' to the city's housing estates. He is right.

In Millbank ward in last year's local elections, the three Labour candidates — myself among them — unseated the three Tory councillors, including Teresa Gorman, scourge of public sector housing and now Harvey Proctor's successor as MP for Billericay. Across Westminster, Labour made spectacular gains, coming within 100 votes of taking control of the Council and slashing the Conservative majority from 27 to four. Hartley's designated sales policy is intended to stop the rot.

In Millbank, a stone's throw from Downing Street and the Palace of Westminster, almost every council flat is designated for sale. The Grosvenor Estate, blocks of chequerboard listed buildings designed by Nicholas Ridley's grandfather Edward Lutyens and running from behind the Department of the Environment on Marsham Street to the edge of Westminster School's fenced off playing fields in Vincent Square, is dilapidated and, in many cases, unfit for human habitation. But in a few years' time it will have been transformed into a playground of luxury flats housing Tory MPs within the sound of the Division Bells and providing pieds à terre for City whizz-kids, 15 minutes' drive by BMW from the stock market.

In this election year, rents were pegged. It is more than likely that they will very soon rise to a level at which tenants will be forced to the conclusion that it is cheaper to mortgage than to rent. Those who can afford neither will find no consolation in the private sector in which rents, when 'liberated' from control by the government, will go through the roof.

The council tentants of Millbank and other wards would like to ask those who forged the designated sales policy where they are now expected to live if they cannot afford to buy *or* rent at new levels. But Peter Hartley, who counts no council dwellers among his privileged electors in Lancaster Gate, declines to answer. He, and his Conservative colleagues, show nothing but contempt for those public sector tenants to whom he has referred in a council meeting as 'a ragbag' and, in the letters column of the *Guardian*, as 'thugs and hooligans' and 'idiots'. He has written to tell me that he 'cannot see the point of attending' meetings with tenants who would like to hear from him an explanation and justification of a policy which will so directly and, in many instances, so drastically affect their lives. He has little knowledge of the needs and expectations of those who depend upon the public sector for that most basic of rights, the right to a home. He manifests no apparent sense of responsibility or duty to the thousands of council tenants or the hundreds of Westminster's homeless who look to him to provide the essential services which local government exists to administer.

Councillor Hartley and his Conservative colleagues regard council tenants as economic liabilities because they place demands on council resources and as political antagonists because, quite simply, they tend to vote Labour. At last Tuesday's meeting of the housing committee, Cllr Hartley ordered a force of 40 police to clear the public gallery of those council dwellers, among them pensioners, young mothers and children, who had come peaceably to remind him and his Conservative colleagues of their existence. Eleven arrests were made and five Labour councillors face charges.

Peter Bradley

Peter Bradley is a Westminster councillor.

Women's vote

An error made nonsense of a sentence in Anna Coote's article on gender differences in voting last week. It should have read: 'Why are men, who are more pro-Tory than women when not in unions, so overwhelmingly Labour when unionised?' We're sorry about the confusion.

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Post-election blues – a sour note for Labour?

COUNCIL BY-ELECTIONS since the general election have been good news for the Tories, bad for the Alliance and worse for Labour. The scoreboard identifies all the by-elections which took place between its last appearance (*NS* 10 April) and last Thursday. However, the following analysis is based upon the 73 by-elections which took place since 18 June, the first Thursday after the general election.

The gains and loss table is as follows:

	Seats defended	Seats lost	Seats gained	Seats held now
Con	21	4	12	29
Lab	33	12	2	23
Lib	9	4	5	10
SDP	5	2	1	4
Others	5	2	4	7

Fifty-one of these contests were three-cornered. In these wards 107,901 votes were cast:

Conservative	43,845	40.6%
Labour	35,133	32.6%
Liberal/SDP	26,381	24.4%
Others	2,542	2.4%

The Conservatives, clearly benefiting from their remarkable third-term victory, won three times as many seats as they lost, ending the period with a net gain of eight seats and a clear lead in the popular vote.

Unlike its normal pattern in recent years the Alliance lost as many seats as it won and secured just under one-quarter of the total vote.

Labour secured only one-third of the popular vote even though 25 of the 51 three-cornered vacancies were Labour-held and lost six seats for every one gained. The 'London Factor' still seems to haunt Labour with four of its 12 losses coming from the capital.

It is still too soon after the general election to conclude whether these early signs portend important shifts in support for the parties, but the evidence must be worrying for Labour. The next Council Scoreboard may reveal whether these results are simply the product of post-election 'blues' or whether Labour is facing a serious problem. ●

If the caption fits

No 37

Any person who allows a cunning photographer such an opportunity deserves, we feel, to feature in the caption competition. Now don't be *too* nasty — the poor chap's had quite a roasting in the papers — 'Mr Archer is a mimic writer . . . not exactly a *bad* play . . . entirely synthetic' — now that his new play's up and running at the Queens Theatre. Thinks bubbles or captions, please, by 12 October. Winner gets a ten-pound book token.

No 35 winner

No winner this week — you'll have to pull your socks up! Two near misses: Ken Livingstone: 'I think I'll try for the editorship of the *New Statesman*.' (*Katie Mallett, Canvey Island.*) Ken: 'Anyone buying two copies gets an MP *free*.' (*Brian Ruth, London.*)

First with the smears

THE SHOCKING story of nearly 1,000 women whose cervical smear tests were mistakenly passed as normal by now-retired consultant Kathleen Lodge in Merseyside was on all the front pages and news bulletins last week. You read it here first a whole two months ago (Ian Williams, 'A smeared bill of health', 24 July). For Tony Benn's meeja, news doesn't seem to happen until there's a press conference or press handout. ●

COUNCIL SCOREBOARD

9 April

Dumfries & Galloway SRC	LAB GAIN (SDP)
Basingstoke DC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Knowsley MDC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Liverpool MDC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Lewisham LBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Southwark LBC	Lab hold

15 April

Central SRC	Lab hold

30 April

Devon CC	CON GAIN (SDP)
Wiltshire CC	Lab hold
Croydon LBC	Con hold
Croydon LBC	Con hold
Northamptonshire CC	Con hold
Devon CC	Lib hold

7 May

Brent LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
West Sussex CC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Hereford & Worcester CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Staffordshire CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Staffordshire CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Shropshire CC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Camden LBC	Lab hold
Norfolk CC	Lab hold
Northamptonshire CC	Lab hold
Northamptonshire CC	Lab hold
Nottinghamshire CC	Lab hold
Oxfordshire CC	Lab hold
Shropshire CC	Lab hold
Bromley LBC	Con hold
Hertfordshire CC	Con hold
Kent CC	Con hold
Somerset CC	Con hold
Staffordshire CC	Con hold
Staffordshire CC	Con hold
Suffolk CC	Con hold
Gloucestershire CC	Lib hold

14 May

Motherwell SDC	Lab hold

28 May

Redbridge LBC	Con hold
Strathkelvin	Con hold

4 June

Copeland DC	3 Lab holds

11 June

Lothian SRC	Lab hold
Manchester MDC	Lab hold
Edinburgh SDC	Con hold
Merton LBC	Con hold
Selby DC	2 Con holds
Tendring DC	3 Con holds
Cornwall CC	Lib hold

18 June

Preston DC	Lab hold

25 June

Derby DC	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Basingstoke DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Burnley DC	Lab hold
Derby DC	Lab hold
Strathclyde SRC	Lab hold
Wigan MDC	Lab hold

2 July

Tunbridge Wells DC	CON GAIN (SDP)
Monklands SDC	SNP GAIN (Lab)
Surrey Heath DC	Con hold
Three Rivers DC	Con hold

16 July

Haringey LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Gwynedd WCC	PLAID CYMRU GAIN (Ind)

23 July

Kingston LBC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Durham CC	Lab hold
Durham DC	Lab hold
Camden LBC	Con hold
Walsall MDC	Con hold

30 July

Clwyd CC	PLAID CYMRU GAIN (Lab)
Oxford DC	Lab hold
Richmond LBC	Alliance hold
Colwyn WDC	Lib hold
Sedgfield DC	2 SDP/1 Con hold
Oxfordshire CC	Ind hold

6 August

Blackburn DC	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Surrey CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Dudley MDC	Lab hold
Surrey CC	Con hold
Tandridge DC	Con hold

13 August

North Yorkshire CC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Thanet DC	IND GAIN (Con)
Nottinghamshire CC	Lab hold
Southampton DC	Con hold

20 August

Manchester MDC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Manchester MDC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Pendle DC	LIB GAIN (Con)

27 August

Stockport MDC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Swansea WDC	Con hold
West Glamorgan WCC	Con hold

3 September

Wokingham DC	Con hold
Cannock Chase DC	Lib hold

10 September

Basildon DC	CON GAIN (Lab)
East Devon DC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Cleveland CC	CON GAIN (SDP)
Greenwich LBC	Lab hold
Haringey LBC	Lab hold
Haringey LBC	Lab hold
Lancashire CC	Lab hold
Tayside SRC	Lab hold
Newark DC	Con hold
Nottinghamshire CC	Con hold
Preston DC	Con hold

17 September

Suffolk CC	Lab hold
Brent LBC	Con hold
East Sussex CC	Con hold
Warwickshire CC	Lib hold
Angus SDC	SNP hold
Breckland DC	Ind hold

24 September

Calderdale MDC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Enfield LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Enfield LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Southwark LBC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Somerset CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Calderdale MDC	Lab hold
Leeds MDC	Lab hold
Mansfield DC	Lab hold
St Helens MDC	Lab hold
Hart DC	Con hold
Dorset CC	Alliance hold
Somerset CC	Lib hold

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Doctor SPUC: pro-Life but not as we know it

CYNICAL observers of Liverpool politics will see a direct connection between David Alton's much-reduced general election majority, Liverpool's large Roman Catholic population and his proposed amendment to the 1967 Abortion Act.

The cynics are only partially right. Neither Alton nor the Liverpool Liberals have ever disdained a policy which garners votes, but he has little or nothing extra to gain from using his third place in the Private Members' Bill ballot for this measure.

Moving against one of his leader's most tangible legislative successes has certainly not helped the Alliance. Even less so does it advance Alton's political ambitions in any new party, as his resignation as chief whip shows.

His action follows a sincerely-held personal belief backed by local Liberal Party members, one of whom was phoning the Community Health Council the week before to accuse its chair of 'trying to create a master race like Hitler did' for writing in the local paper supporting genetic screening of unborn babies for abnormalities at a late stage of pregnancy.

But supporters of the 1967 Act, which was David Steel's private members bill, would be both tactically and factually wrong if they stereotyped all their opponents as hysterical or cynical.

There were few nun's habits or clerical dog collars to be seen among the 550 delegates to the SPUC annual conference in Liverpool, the venue for Alton's announcement. Mostly young, over half of them women, they were far from the image of US 'Pro-Life' groups, whose respect for unborn lives often seems tempered with an obsession with more nukes and capital punishment.

Labour councillor Pat Tyrell from nearby Halton, for instance, is no rightwinger. 'I'm against capital punishment in prisons, corporal punishment in schools — and opposition to abortion follows logically from those. Abortion is anti-socialist, he said, unconsciously echoing Alton, whose speech called it 'illiberal'.

National director Phyllis Bowman is equally unstereotypical. When she helped found SPUC, 20 years ago, she was 'living in sin' with her boyfriend, and only became a Catholic four years later. She is against capital punishment and she doesn't slavishly follow the Papal line on contraception either. 'As far as I'm concerned, someone can take pills till they're coming out of their ears, it's their body to do with as they like. With contraception today, I can't really see any excuse for abortions.'

Altogether SPUC's all party support and its grassroots network make it a formidable operation. Ken Hargreaves announced at the close of the conference a 'try, try and try again' policy to introduce the amendment. But the 1967 Act was introduced against *backstreet* abortions. Memories of that have faded, and because everyone is against abortion in the abstract, the *anti-* abortion campaign has a clearer run. Organisation more than ethics will win or lose this particular battle — and SPUC seems ahead on the organisation front, whatever your views on the ethics.

Ian Williams

POLITICAL SKETCH

Try trusting the people

Edward Pearce

THE LABOUR Party with its usual genius for the Rococo compromise has opted for a collegiate voting system in respect of the constituency reselection. It is very far from perfect but at least a large element of one member one vote (more like one member 0.6 of a vote) enters into the party's constitutional practice.

The other parties are far from angelic. The Liberals make a great noise with their anarcho-municipalists buzzing round the boroughs and at conference, but wisely retain a veto, a crude mechanism which suggests the tiniest smidgeon of doubt as to the universal wisdom of all conclusions reached by activists. The Tories are Leninists through and through — a central command polity with a dab of *Führerprinzip* behind the ears. The SDP practised a level and consistent form of internal party democracy with conference modified by a council and the whole thing subject to internal referendum.

> ***'Labour's constitutional practice has run an arthritic system which owes most to the Habsburgs'***

Recent troubles and the decisions flowing out of them shouldn't blind us to the excellence of SDP constitutional practice. They have voted for what they wanted after proper debate: all accredited members have had a say in the process. I don't see how that can be challenged whatever difficulties it makes for leaders (though the uncharitable may be reminded of the Golden Constitution of Poland).

Labour in its broad constitutional practice has run an arthritic system which, if we are looking for historic parallels, owes most to the Habsburgs. The leader is not quite at the stage of the Emperor Ferdinand who remarked 'Ich bin Kaiser and Ich *will* Knödel' ('I am the Emperor and I want dumplings'). He just feels like that! Authority is in the hands of power blocs led by great folk. (The T & G have played the role of the Magyar nobility in sustaining the throne at all times — when they were not shaking it.)

As in Austria-Hungary, new interest groups emerge. The London Labour Party lacks the broad sense which Karl Lueger brought to bear on most issues when governing Vienna. But the sudden assertion of itself by a great capital city through a populist leadership is faintly familiar. Above all, the Habsburgs covered themselves with a tattered patchwork of interests inherited from Auntie, and they commonly bought political peace by appeasement.

In the days of Ernest Bevin and Arthur Deakin and the old NUGMW (now the GMB) the right dominated. That power swung left in the 1960s but now shows considerable sign of swinging back. John Edmonds, Alan Tuffin and Bill Jordan represent a moderate wing with its nerve restored. But the intention even under the collegiate compromise is not to do it by the barons alone but to enfranchise the workers, otherwise the membership.

FOR AS LONG as anybody can remember, Labour maintained a totally bogus record of membership. Local constituencies put up the money for 1,000 members. Transport House/Walworth Road liked the colour of the cash and counted a thousand without asking tedious pedantic questions. That thousand not uncommonly represented a real figure of 300 of whom 40 were active. It was often fewer.

The fates of Bill Rodgers and John Cartwright are instructive. In Cartwright's Labour days Woolwich emulated the local provident society in its membership figures. A monster party of several thousands on true figures was built up by a member who was also an ex-agent and tireless. When John left he took them with him; accordingly he still sits in Westminster after two elections. Bill Rodgers had an almost notional party, something which made him so uneasy that he was the prime SDP opponent of the idea of fighting by-elections — a disastrous missed opportunity for that party. In 1983 Bill lost.

Even under a system half-way converted to one-member-one-vote, every MP has his own motives for building up a party in his own image, in broad popularity among voters rather than activists. A reason for belonging to a party is also created. The bedsitter element in the '60s and '70s understood very well that the normal non-obsessive person's appetite for rancorous six-hour meetings is limited and that local GMCs could become self-selective by a process of creative revulsion. The 1am nattering caucus is a handy mechanism and Neil Kinnock, psychologically at odds with the London borough furies, appreciates that he and his allies are gainers from a larger membership voting unharassed.

Ironically, the model of Habsburg Labour should be democratic Austria whose Social Democrats have always been a mass party, have never lurched to the exhibitionist, self-indulgent left and have kept a consistent if sometimes shared hand on power. This is what it is about. The 1987 election like the 1983 election has delivered the message that a left-wing party will not be elected despite the moderation of its leaders. The perception of a Livingstone-led drive on the constituencies may have been highly coloured by the Tories, but it wasn't incredible because the parliamentary party *has* been under siege.

The Baroque machinery of the past survives for conference decisions, in burned and instructed fingers. Even the limited new rules in the constituencies invite MPs to recruit voters as members. Some correspondence between the two groups has been long missing. Barbara Castle signalled everything that predicated the present roll of defeats when she observed: 'Our ethical reach was beyond the grasp of the voters.' Stooping is the pre-condition of conquering. Nobody has trusted people in this country. Perhaps if the Lady Macbeth of the manufacturing sector is to be budged, Labour should try. □

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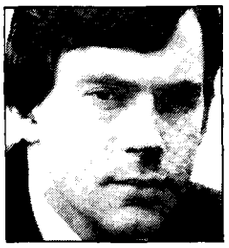

GORDON BROWN

Pile Labour Party membership high and sell it cheap

A STORY IS TOLD of the internal affairs of one Labour constituency party in Scotland. Before an enthusiast could become a member of the Labour Party he had to have an interview with his local MP.

'Are you a Marxist?'

'No.'

'Are you a Trotskyist?'

'No.'

'Are you a member of the International Marxist Group or of Militant?'

'No.'

'Well, why does somebody like you want to join the Labour Party?'

Happily such interrogations by MPs are a thing of the past when, in some places, keeping people out ('we're full up') was given a higher priority than attracting people in.

Yet today, despite a flurry of local and national recruitment campaigns, Labour has only 297,000 individual members, an average of just over 400 in each constituency. There is only one Labour Party member for every 120 voters on the electoral roll, and only a handful of Labour's 633 constituency parties have memberships in four figures.

At no point in its history has Labour, the party of the masses, ever been a mass party. Even in the 'Red Clydeside' heights of the 1920s Glasgow Conservatives could always claim more members than Glasgow socialists. For a brief moment, in the 1950s, national party membership topped one million but it was not all it seemed, the figures artificially inflated by a system of creative accounting that gave every local party with membership below that figure a nominal membership of 1,000.

By European standards the party's membership is very low indeed. Of the most successful European socialist parties, the Austrians have 700,000 members, the Germans 900,000 and the Swedes more than 1,000,000 — an astonishing one member for every eight voters. As the Tribune pamphlet *A Mass Party* published last week states, the British Labour Party is attempting to build broad support from one of the narrowest membership bases in Europe.

IS MASS MEMBERSHIP important? Not for the Tories, whose million-plus members' register is simply one of invitees to their sherry parties and candidates for wine-club offers, with little question of votes, except, perhaps, for the Catering Committee. Not for Dr Owen either, now about to relaunch himself with an apparently memberless party that looks more like the political wing of a grocery chain. Mass membership is not even that important to the American Democrats and Republicans, whose system of 'registered supporters' means that their parties are ghost towns only briefly populated before each election.

Anti-socialist parties do not need members, except for their cosmetic effect, including crowd scenes at party conferences. Their élites, backed by big money, can exercise power in and out of government by media pressure, by direct business lobbying and by financial manipulation. Socialist parties inhabit a vastly different world. They have but one strength: the potential of widespread and active popular support. As the early founders of the Labour Party realised, the democratic socialism that would be most successful in electing and sustaining Labour governments was one that rested on mass popular foundations.

Some might argue — some socialists might even argue — that the traditional role and usefulness of mass membership, door knocking, leafleting, organising local meetings, is a thing of the past now that political attitudes are more likely to be shaped by multi-media advertising campaigns and by TV and national newspaper information and propaganda. Yet for Labour, so hugely disadvantaged in the media, mass membership is more important than ever. If the *Sun* sells 4 million copies Labour needs 400,000 members simply to set the record straight.

> ***'A massive party need not be a passive party. Better communications with its membership, the improvement of our political education and opening up a dialogue with community organisations could involve thousands more . . . Building a bigger, better informed, more politically active membership is the first stage in Labour's road back to power'***

Mass membership matters between elections too. Building a much bigger Labour Party would, of course, be an insurance policy against any anti-democratic factions ever going off on one-way sectarian ego-trips, but the positive advantages of mass membership are much greater than that, offering new potential for socialist change. Throwing open our doors to millions of working people would multiply and diversify Labour's contact with the voters to our huge political and electoral advantage. It would ensure local parties were more and more responsive to the communities they seek to represent. It would mean popular support for Labour governments when they came under attack from financial institutions at home and abroad. And, with several thousand members in each constituency, local Labour parties would strengthen their position as one of the many focal points of community life. Just think of the gains from having members in every street and neighbourhood, able to defend the Labour case in every club, pub, or community centre, and of course active in every office and factory.

LABOUR'S HISTORICALLY low membership is a puzzle, because the potential has always existed to make Labour a huge broad-based political party, the biggest in Europe. Elsewhere in Europe Labour movements tend to be fragmented, sharply divided on religious, nationalist or factional lines. Britain is unique in possessing a Labour movement with one major political party to which trades unionists look. More important, perhaps, no other country can boast so many trades unionists — nearly 6 million men and women in a range of occupations — who have voted, in widely publicised ballots, to contribute to political funds and who are affiliated, as political levy-payers, to the Labour Party.

The way forward is to build on the success of these political fund ballots and, as an experiment, to offer trades unionists an economical and easy way to join Labour's ranks. The party membership fee should be reduced to allow trades unionists to top up their levy payment by £1 or £2 a year. In return they should obtain full membership rights, and be offered a range of educational, social and cultural services and activities, including a regular flow of information about party policies and events.

If the experiment looked like working, it should swiftly be extended, offering lower-price membership and improved services to the many other groups — students and young people, women who work at home, unemployed men and women and pensioners — whom Labour needs and who need Labour. All political parties need healthy finances, the Labour Party more than most. Financially, as well as electorally, Labour will be far better off with more members paying less rather than with fewer members paying more.

A massive party need not be a passive party. Better communications with its membership, the improvement of our political education and opening up a dialogue with community organisations could involve thousands more in our decision-making affairs.

Since 11 June, there has been much talk about the need for change, and most of it concentrated upon the party's ideological superstructure. In the view of many, not least the authors of the Tribune Group pamphlet, it is change at the base, at the point of direct contact with the community, that is every bit as important. Building a bigger, better-informed, more politically active membership in each constituency — building the mass party socialists dreamed of from our beginnings in the 1880s — is the first stage in Labour's road back to power. The second hundred years of British Socialism could yet be its most exciting and most successful. □

Gordon Brown is Labour MP for Dunfermline East.

A Mass Party *is available from the Tribune Group of MPs at the House of Commons, London SW1, 50p.*

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Rise of the European race

A resurgent racist party in France points to the first stirrings of a new pan-European folk brotherhood. We report from France, Britain, Italy and West Germany: first, a conversation with Jean-Marie Le Pen's would-be and unlikely sponsor,

SIR ALFRED SHERMAN

PA

Camera Press

'The English are much more racist than the French,' alleges Alfred Sherman (left), who wanted to import the 'liberal in many ways' Jean-Marie Le Pen (right)

SIR ALFRED SHERMAN placed himself — in attempting to see how Jean-Marie Le Pen would play in Blackpool — athwart a tangled knot of issues surrounding the increasingly central matter of race. Being a Jew himself added to the complexity. What Sherman tried and failed to do was important: not in itself, but in the light it sheds upon the remorselessly increasing concentration which the right is giving to racial matters.

Sherman's own account of why he approached Le Pen is simple: to help save the *Front National* for democracy. 'The FN can go one of two ways: it can become more "mainstream" or it can go really anti-semitic. Le Pen now has to choose between explaning his position on the Holocaust and playing the anti-semitic card. He may win more votes in the latter way, at least in the short term.' To the obvious objection that Le Pen's televised doubting of the facts of the holocaust is the classic gambit of the anti-semite, Sherman responded by saying that Le Pen was tricked by the media and misrepresented by the left and Jewish bodies.

Sherman wanted to help bring the FN into the mainstream by forging links between it and the Conservatives: he sees the French party as 'liberal in many ways', especially on the economy: not anti-semitic, or indeed racist, but anti-Arab on grounds of which he would approve. 'The French don't want to be swamped by Moslem Arabs who cannot be loyal to France. Moslems will never fit in: there are no democratic or secular Moslem states. This is aggravated by high rates of crime in immigrant areas.' He expands the point that the French are not really racist by saying that Le Pen has black servants — from the French Antilles. 'The French believe it's allegiance which makes you French, not colour.'

He moves to a consideration of Britain. That's different. 'The English are much more racist than the French. The mould of the party system has not broken here, and it keeps it down. But if we had PR, and a party organised against immigrants, against homosexuals and so on, then it would have success.' Sherman thus sees the need for pre-emptive action, before this feeling grows so powerful that it *does* break the mould. His recipe:

- stop more immigrants coming ('Lots still are');
- stop 'persecuting' white people through bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality;
- change the education system so that everyone can have their own schools ('can't be any worse than it is now');
- begin 'constructive resettlement'. That needs some explaining.

Sherman thinks that the influx of black and Asian labour was very largely sucked in to failing industries — like textiles and foundries. The mix of mass immigration and decline was a fatal one, and the problems will never be solved. Better to grasp the nettle and send them back: but send them back both with cash equivalents of all the entitlements they have or are likely to have as British citizens *and* export with them the industries in which they work, and which are a drain on the economy anyway. 'You can't,' he says, 'have constructive resettlement without fundamental economic reform.' So textile plants get shifted to Pakistan: both sides benefit.

Economic reform includes the public sector. Public sector provision builds in resentment over minorities, if they are seen (and they always will be so seen, rightly or wrongly) to be gaining more than the whites. See council housing estates. But no one feels bad about an Asian shopkeeper or a black cab driver. Answer: where the market takes over, discrimination decreases.

Sherman is no longer the influence he was on the Prime Minister: he now excoriates the Tories for stupidity and timidity, and expresses a hurt surprise that no one — not the Prime Minister, not Norman Tebbit — contacted him over Le Pen's visit. But he expresses themes which are no longer out of the court of political debate: and his attempt to bring the concerns of the FN closer to those of the Conservative Party would — may still — give a fairer wind to the trends visible on the West European right.

These are: a stressing of the cultural separateness of certain groups; a desire to re-define Britishness (or Frenchness, or any other set of national characteristics) to exclude other cultures; a detestation of the 'race relations industry'; an encouragement of the tendencies within many ethnic groups to set up their own separate institutions — as schools. Though Sherman claims the banner of relative liberalism, he is squarely in that camp.

He is right in this at least: the issue will not recede. The spectres he raises in Britain, and the example he points to in France, require a response from those who believe in a multi-cultural, multi-racial society whose premises will be increasingly harshly questioned, and which is far from being popularly accepted everywhere. Curiously, Sherman himself pointed to such a response. Speaking of British Jewry, he said that it would disappear as a separate community early in the next century: 'tolerance leading to intermarriage, and a low middle-class birth rate, will kill it off'.

The Jewish community suffered intolerance (still does, at times) and had a high birth rate; intermarriage was deeply frowned on (still is, though less so). A slow attrition of separateness, and of intolerance — much of that due to Gentile guilt over the Holocaust — has led to the position which Sherman describes. Tolerance, and a promotion of equal rights which is tolerance's active partner, could repeat a similar trajectory with other cultures. Ironic that Sherman should be unable to make the connection.

John Lloyd

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FRANCE

An electorate of protest

THE FAR-RIGHT in France has rarely been healthier. With a clear-cut programme calling for the expulsion of 400,000 immigrants to cure unemployment, condemning homosexuality as a threat to the moral order and advocating stronger police powers to combat rising crime figures, the French National Front has jumped from a score of 0.11 per cent in the 1983 local elections to an average in today's polls of 12-14 per cent. The Front, with a little help from President Mitterrand's switch to proportional representation, can now boast 33 parliamentary seats.

The popularity of the National Front owes much to the belligerent demagoguery of its founder and leader, the thick-set ex-paratrooper Jean-Marie Le Pen. He is skilful at handling often hostile questioning on television, including reminders of his torturing of a young Algerian in the war over Algerian independence. In the law courts, Le Pen has won every one of his many libel suits against accusations of racism. He is his party's best asset.

On the campaign trail for the spring 1988 presidential elections, Le Pen described himself as the standard-bearer of a 'populist and nationalistic right'. That is an under-estimate: the Front's voters are in fact a much more heterogeneous lot. The hard core of the Front is the traditional extreme right in France, nationalistic and xenophobe. But beyond that, Le Pen has won support from the unemployed, from the young, and from workers who live in run-down council flats where immigrants are unwelcome. Surprisingly, the Front also attracts lycée pupils and students from traditionally right-wing bourgeois families.

Le Pen's electorate, says the head of political studies at the SOFRES polling institute, Jérome Jaffré, is 'an electorate of protest', and therefore a fragile one. The motivations vary according to the area. In northern and north-eastern France, it is protest at the loss of jobs due to the running down of the shipping and steel industries. Little by little, the extreme right is stealing the anti-system, protest vote away from what was until recently its jealous guardian, the Communist Party.

Must I like Jews?

Opinions vary as to whether Le Pen's dismissal of the gas chambers as 'one detail in the history of the Second World War' in a radio interview on 13 September was a slip – or a deliberate play for anti-Jewish support. For Laurent Fabius, the former Socialist Prime Minister, Le Pen 'is simply a fascist'. Members of the ruling parties on the right were shocked by Le Pen's remarks, including the usually immovable Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua. Yet anti-semitism was already part of a panoply of prejudices that the leader of the *Front National* preyed upon to bring national support for his party from 3 per cent up to 10, hiding them in public behind the slightly more respectable cloak of nationalism.

It is not the first time Le Pen has made remarks that indicate an undercurrent of anti-semitism, outside of his early career as a Poujadiste MP between 1956 and 1962. Not content with attacking the leader of SOS Racisme's Arab parentage, he also said that 'if Harlem Desir gets a good press and receives subsidies, it's because he is half Jewish'. In 1984, he asked a television interviewer 'am I obliged to like Jewish culture, and isn't it rather dangerous to give special protection to Jewish people?' This year, his party actively supported Klaus Barbie during the trial in Lyon. Anyone attending one of Le Pen's meetings cannot fail to notice the way he pauses after mentioning the name of a Jewish politician, to leave space for an expected wave of boos and hisses from the crowd.

> ***'Any reference to a wartime event causes some commotion within the political establishment in France . . . the* Front National *also supported Klaus Barbie in his trial'***

Any reference to a wartime event causes some commotion within the political establishment in France. In this case, Le Pen attracted vehement criticism from those who are genuinely concerned about racism in any form, and restrained comment from those who were anxious not to go against the popular feeling that had been awakened by Barbie's conviction.

He has kept a firm grip on his own party, pandering to the orthodox hardliners led by Jean-Pierre Stirbois and a 'moderate' faction led by Pascal Arrighi, an MP for Marseille, advocate of closer links with the majority. To keep Stirbois happy, he consistently calls for tough anti-immigration regulations, a strengthened police force with a local militia to combat crime, an end to abortion, and measures to increase the birth rate in France.

For Arrighi, he has tried to keep his rhetoric in check. Bitter irony: Arrighi had just returned from Israel as head of the parliamentary Franco-Israeli friendship society when Le Pen uttered the word detail to describe the gas chambers.

Arrighi's position fits a chilling racialist theory that has gained ground in the FN — to open dialogue with the 'oriental Jews' who they feel share their anti-Arab racism and nationalism by advocating a Jewish state with all Arabs expelled — and to reject the 'European Jews' as 'left-wing degenerates', 'obsessed with genocide' and willing to talk to 'PLO terrorists'.

A spread of support

The FN built up a durable and well-organised party machine after Le Pen inherited several million francs from a right-wing intellectual called Hubert Lambert in 1977, including a leadership training school for the new and local regional branch members. Some 15,000 people — a mixture of Marseille dockers, who used to vote Communist, farmers, shopkeepers, royalists, skinheads and Parisian yuppies — attended the Bleu, Blanc, Rouge rally in Paris on 20 September to hear Le Pen launch an attack on the 'lobbies that control information' — the press, the anti-racist organisations that sued him, and the political establishment. 'When a fourth power grows without checks and balances, without morality, it is time for the people to rise.'

Le Pen's remarks were outrageous, but not shocking enough for prominent conservatives like Gaudin or the former justice minister Jean Lecanuet to shy away from local agreements with the *Front National*. His espousal of the 'revisionist' theory is a mere detail in the extreme right-wing track record of one of France's most ideologically consistent post-war politicians.

The National Front's bastion is on the south coast, where widespread hostility towards the high number of North African immigrants means Le Pen is preaching to the converted. Here the National Front's score is double the national average, reaching nearly 30 per cent in the 1986 parliamentary elections.

Le Pen's nationalism appeals especially to the bitter 'pieds noirs', several thousand repatriates from French Algeria who left the colony in droves when it won independence. The 'pieds noirs' and others like them have deserted the Gaullist RPR (*Rassemblement Pour la Republique*), chief victim of the Front's bandwagon in one northern borough of Marseilles, where the RPR's share of the vote has fallen from 21 to 6 per cent over the past six years.

But in the south of France, leaders of the RPR and the centre-right UDF (*Union de la Démocratie Francaise*) lack the will to target the Front. Allain Rollat, a writer on the National Front, says there is an all-party anti-immigrant consensus on the south coast. In his 1983 bid to be elected mayor of Marseille, former Socialist interior minister Gaston Deferre campaigned on the slogan: 'The right is to blame for the arrival of the immigrants, Vote against illegal immigration.'

The consensus has done much to ease the setting up of working partnerships between the two parties of the right (UDF and RPR) and the Front in several regional councils where Front representatives act as arbiters.

Stepping the right way

The UDF takes its marching orders from Jean Claude Gaudin, who has the Front to thank for his presidency of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur regional council. Head of the UDF's parliamentary group, he was one of the few French politicians to play down Le Pen's 'a detail of the Second World War'. Gaudin commented: 'A political statement has nothing to do with a consensus established at regional level.' Only with the support of National Front voters can he hope to be elected mayor of Marseille in two years' time.

Co-operating with the Front has done nothing to brighten the prospects of the RPR and the UDF in the south — quite the opposite. But the RPR's leader, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, has so far refused to condemn the local alliances. Speaking on French radio, he said they were 'a matter for local party leaders'. Le Pen, whose offer of a national alliance remains on the table, promptly

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hailed this as 'a step in the right direction'.

The French left's condemnations of Le Pen may be more strident than the RPR's or the UDF's, but its methods have proved just as fruitless.

That is especially true of the Communist Party, which blames the other parties and the media for the rise of the Front. In the south of France, Communist Party bosses as well as voters have switched sides. André Iosardo, now the Front's number two in Marseille, used to be a local councillor for the Communist Party. He ditched the Communists after a decade, shocked at finding what he calls 'Arab no-man's-lands' where, he claims, French government officials dare not enter. In last year's elections, Iosardo scored 30.6 per cent, the National Front's top rating in Marseille.

The national Communist Party strategy against the Front became clearer when, after much hesitation, the Communist candidate André Lajoinie did accept an invitation to debate with the National Front leader on TV earlier this month. Lajoinie said his duty was to 'unmask' Le Pen, to show National Front voters that they had been 'duped'. For Philippe Moreau-Defarges, professor at the prestigious Political Science Institute, the Communist Party's attempts are doomed to failure: 'Why should the National Front voters who left the Communist Party go back to it? They chose Le Pen because the Communist Party lacked something it still lacks today: a miracle solution to the problems of immigration.'

Adapting to the foreigners

That is a problem the Socialist Party will also have to tackle. Michel Rocard, a long-time rival of President Mitterrand and a possible presidential candidate, says: 'Obviously there are no miracles in politics, but there are two things we must do to stand up to the National Front. First, bring unemployment down below two million. And second, we have to adapt French society to four million foreigners, to stop Le Pen exploiting the problems of integration.'

Easier said than done, say the anti-racist organisations who feel politicians have failed to stick up for their rights. The biggest and newest of these organisations is SOS Racisme, which has a strong following especially among teenagers and students. With offices in 300 French towns and abroad, members of the group spend much of their time helping the victims of discrimination and of a series of racially-motivated attacks, often by publicising a case in the media.

The charismatic young leader of SOS Racisme, Harlem Desir, is very cautious in his rebuttal of the National Front. He is careful not to criticise the Front's voters but aims at their nationalism, by accusing Le Pen of betraying the republican values of 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité'. Desir goes further and calls for the integration of immigrants into French society, arguing the alternative would lead to ghettos. For that he is accused of political naivety by other anti-racist organisations. Albert Lévy, secretary-general of the left-wing MRAP, says Desir should be much tougher in his defence of immigrants: 'I think most immigrants see integration as a way of erasing their cultural individuality. M. Desir should join us and fight for their right to be different.' French anti-racist organisations do sometimes work together, but much work is duplicated. Like SOS Racisme, for instance, the MRAP also has 300 offices in French towns doing much the same work.

It is unlikely that the anti-racist organisations alone will convince anything but a small proportion of Le Pen's voters to desert him. Even Le Pen's blunders alienate very few of his supporters: his comments that Aids can be caught through 'sweat, tears, saliva and physical contact' and his questioning of the existence of gas chambers in the Second World War have cost him *little. Perhaps they are not blunders after all.*

John Follain and Peter Capella

W GERMANY

Just a shade to the right — for now

Bonn

ANY NEO-NAZI or extreme right-wing development in the country which gave birth to Nazism attracts attention; sometimes more than it deserves. One this year went round the world: the demonstrations in West Berlin on the death of Hitler's former deputy, Rudolf Hess, and in the small Bavarian town of Wunsiedel where he was to have been buried. As is often the case, the isolated television film gave a false picture.

On the weekend before Hess's funeral in late August, the police detained about 80 skinheads and neo-Nazis in or near Wunsiedel; on the day it was to have been held, about 500 demonstrated at the family grave. To put that into perspective: given a good issue — Bonn's decision in 1983 to station American cruise and Pershing II nuclear missiles, for example — the left can mobilise up to 500,000 for a single rally.

But it is also certain that those 500 do not represent even the tip of the extreme-right iceberg in West Germany. The domestic intelligence agency, the BfV, put the number of extreme right-wingers and neo-Nazis at just over 22,000 last year, spread through 74 distinct organisations.

The most significant, with around 16,000 members, is the German Peoples Union (DVU) of Dr Gerhard Frey, the millionaire publisher of well-selling hate sheets. Along with the 6,100 members of the German National Party (NPD) DVU supporters are classed by the BfV as extreme right-wing but not neo-Nazis; i.e., they do not call for a Fourth Reich, but do 'put the collective interests of the [German] people above freedom of the individual'. The difference is fine, which leads many on the left to accuse the BfV of not taking the far right seriously. An agency spokesman says the extremists 'don't present a threat to our free democratic order'. And as to the 'real' neo-Nazis: 'They're violent militants who present more of a police problem than anything else.' He is probably correct in that last judgment. Although bodies like the Free German Workers Party (FAP) appeal to already racist skinheads, they are politically insignificant.

The FAP, the largest of the neo-Nazi groups, grew to its present membership of about 400 when the Action Front of National Socialists under the young, charismatic Michael Kuehnen was banned. Kuehnen controlled the FAP from his prison cell — he is doing three years for spreading Nazi propaganda — for some time but the disclosure of his homosexuality, and that he carries the Aids virus, has killed him politically.

Close observers of the radical right — such as Social Democrat federal member of parliament Ernst Walthemathe whose family was forced to flee from the Nazis when he was a child — would like the FAP banned, but see the real danger more in the parties which can lay some claim to being 'legitimate'. Walthemathe points to the state elections in his native Bremen last month, when a marriage of convenience between the DVU and the NPD put one member into the state parliament after an investment of about £670,000 — more than the campaign funds of all the other parties combined. In Bavaria last year, the 'national-conservative' Republicans came from nowhere to 3 per cent of the vote. 'You have to make a differentiation, though,' Walthemathe says. 'Just because people vote for an extreme right-wing party doesn't mean they're Nazis. Most of the voters for the "List D" [D for Deutschland] in Bremen were protests against the economic situation.'

People's Union boss Frey quite deliberately chose Bremen to launch his 'List D': the proportion of foreigners is high and in the two cities which comprise the state they are noticeable; they are also an easy scapegoat for unemployment, which in Bremen is more than twice the national average.

Few observers give the 'List D' a chance of reaching the 5 per cent of the vote needed for representation in other states, and it is also questionable how long it can even hold together. The DVU, for example, professes to believe firmly in 'Western values' and supports German membership of NATO; the NPD has traditionally pleaded for a 'special German way' of neutrality between the superpowers and is just as anti-American as it is anti-Soviet.

Tony Catterall

ITALY

A question of time for immigrants

ARTICLE 12 of the final section of the Italian Constitution states: 'The reorganisation under any form whatsoever of the dissolved Fascist

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Party is prohibited'. This may be of symbolic rather than of practical value. There is little possibility of banning a fascist or quasi-fascist party as long as it avoids an overt use of fascist symbols or ideology as the Italian Social Movement (MSI), the obvious candidate for the title of 'reconstructed fascist party', has been careful to do.

Its now elderly leader is Giorgio Almirante, MP and MEP. Probably one of the best television performers among Italian politicians (but the competition is flimsy) Almirante served in Mussolini's notorious 'Salo Republic'. His party has operated in a ghetto of its own since the late 1940s. Its electoral supports averages 5-6 per cent with a peak of 8.7 per cent in 1972.

It is generally agreed by all the other parties that a coalition, even at local government level, with the MSI is politically unacceptable. Its existence, however, can be tolerated because it provides some general advantages. It enables the Christian Democrats to appear as a party of the centre and, by attacking the MSI, to reassert its anti-fascist credentials. The left benefits too because the MSI deprives the parties of the centre of a small but significant proportion of the electorate. Finally legality somehow compels the neo-fascist party to operate within the parliamentary rules and to seek respectability.

Respectability is precisely what Almirante has always been striving for. While he has never renounced his links with the hard wing of the party and its connections with a murky underworld of secret services, terrorists, mafiosi and freemasons, Almirante, unlike Le Pen, has not allowed himself to be caught in any controversy of the 'did six million really die?' variety. His rare forays into historiography have always emphasised the distinctive features of Italian fascism and he has had little truck with Nazism. As the acknowledged representative of the 'nostalgic' wing of the Italian far right he looks back to fascism as a golden age only slightly tainted by a little unpleasantness. In that golden age not only the trains used to run on time but there was order and discipline, men were men and women were women and knew their place: devoted spouses and exemplary mothers.

Almirante has tried hard to attract traditional Catholics — hence his support for the anti-divorce and anti-abortion referendum — as well as those conservatives who think that the values of liberal society, though desirable, are ill-adapted for the 'Italian temperament'. With these people the MSI must perform a complicated act: on the one hand, it attacks the Italian Communist Party by presenting itself as the authentic bulwark of anti-communism, the upholder of NATO and of the West against the red barbarians. On the other hand, it must ceaselessly campaign against Christian Democracy because this is where its main reservoir of potential supporters can be found.

The MSI has not yet played the anti-immigrant card. But it is only a question of time. The presence in the country of one million or so immigrants from North Africa and Ethiopia is too obvious an issue to be left untouched. In the meantime Almirante speaks to retired army officers, elderly civil servants, shopkeepers, southern school-teachers who can no longer cope with uppity teenagers, new teaching methods and disrespectful parents. He reflects their tremendous longing for a world of order and certainties. His party, however, is not a monolith. There is a strong faction of 'hard' fascists who talk about revolution and violence and clothe their rhetoric with some ill-digested social-darwinism. They collect a clientele of young thugs, themselves a mixture of dispossessed urban subproletarians and the bored progeny of wealthy provincials.

In these last ten years the MSI has attempted to construct for itself some intellectual roots. It has disregarded the not inconsiderable cultural heritage of Italian fascism: the idealist philosophy of Giovanni Gentile or the more relevant populist corporatism of Giuseppe Bottai. The nostalgic wing does not like to think too hard while the thuggish tendency looks abroad to the French 'Eurofascism' of Drieu La Rochelle or the writings of Julius Evola.

This concoction has produced the lucid recognition that the epoch of 'national' fascisms or 'fascism in a single country' is over. Italian fascism, like everybody else, has gone European: it is time to prepare for a new crusade in defence of European civilisation against other races and alien creeds. Here is to be found the meeting point with Le Pen's supporters.

Donald Sassoon

BRITAIN

'We speak for our people'

THE RUMP of the National Front, after all its recent splits and power-struggles, has adopted a new ideological line. It now believes in the equal 'right of *all* nations and races to run their own affairs free from interference by others'. This new line dovetails with thinking on a wider spectrum of the right in Britain and in Europe which is trying to redefine racism intellectually as 'cultural autonomy'.

The National Front is now under the control of a group led by Nick Griffin, and including former North London Polytechnic student Patrick Harrington, which is much more ideological than the old bootboys. Its paper, *National Front News*, now uncannily resembles the Trotskyist papers of the left. The main headline in August was 'Yankee warmongers go home', and the party slogan has become 'A Third Way Beyond Capitalism and Communism'. More remarkably, the paper has dropped the Union Jack (can the left have it back now?) and replaced it with the Celtic Cross. In its own words, it has replaced 'the old flag of the centralised Westminster state with the fine banners of the British Family of Nations'.

National Front News adds that the Celtic Cross has 'now become *the* design recognised by all National Revolutionaries in Europe as a symbol of our common determination to avoid another tragic European Brothers War'.

This European orientation, combined with the new ideology of 'separate development', puts Alfred Sherman's attempt to bring together the Tory right and Jean-Marie Le Pen in an interesting light. The obstacles to a pan-European fascism (in the style of Peter Jay's *Apocalypse 2000*) have always been the competing nationalist xenophobias of far-right parties; the idea of separate development provides a way of overcoming them.

But the most striking consequence of the British National Front's new line is its willingness to co-operate with black separatists, in particular the American Louis Farrakhan and his supporters in this country. The Front's latest leaflet campaign declares: 'Louis Farrakhan — he speaks for his people. We speak for ours.'

The Front's other new ally in what the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* calls the 'new axis' is Colonel Gadafy, who not only has the advantage of advocating Islamic separatism and hating Israel, but who also is willing to fund destabilisation in Western capitalist countries. Gadafy has funded Farrakhan, and the Front would clearly like to get on the Libyan gravy train. *National Front News* now advertises, with the works of Tolkein and rock band Skrewdriver, Gadafy's *Green Book*.

The only international connection the new-look National Front has not yet made is with 'actually existing' separate development in South Africa.

John Rentoul

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The danger of disarmament to the disarmers

SARAH BENTON *reports on CND's dilemmas*

LAST WEEKEND in the bare hall at the back of the old Co-op building in Islington, now revamped as the Red Rose club, CND's national committee met to review its structure and its strategy. It was the normal (monthly) meeting and CND, being still a live body, is always reviewing its strategy.

But the question posed by Jane Mayes, chair of its international committee, was unusual. It was: 'Is British unilateralism redundant?' This thinking of the unthinkable was made even more remarkable — for those locked in an agony of doubt over the Labour Party's policy of unilateral disarmament — because the question was raised not by Labour's electoral failure, but by the success of Mikhail Gorbachev. As Reagan's negotiators head for talks designed to remove intermediate-range missiles off the face of Europe, it seems that one man from the East has the power to change the world. So, who needs a British mass movement?

Gorbachev and the INF talks are just two of the recent changes which, says Mayes in her strategy paper, 'combine to offer a serious challenge to CND's basic policy of British unilateral disarmament. With this challenge unmet, unanswered, with our groups tired, unfocused and losing their anger, and with Gorbachev seeming to hold the key to the future of the disarmament process, our continued relevance on the national and international political scene is put in question.'

It seemed a good moment to talk to Meg Beresford, 50-year-old general secretary of CND who two weeks ago announced her surprise decision to join the Liberal Party. Her predecessor, Bruce Kent, has decided, unannounced, to apply to join the Labour Party. As he is expected to take over from Paul Johns, apolitical Christian, as chairman in November, this will have CND headed by a Lib-Lab pact.

Is this the future face of British nuclear disarmament? Or does Gorbachev plus Labour's election defeat plus a new pro-Europe centre party spell the end of trying to achieve British nuclear disarmament through any political party let alone a mass movement?

Stefano Cagnoni/Report

Meg Beresford: CND won't drop its unilateralism, but there is scope for work with multilateralists

There's no discouragement

Both Meg Beresford and Bruce Kent cite non-defence reasons for their respective political choices; for one, it is the internationalism and the political style of the Liberals which attract her (she feels 'comfortable' with Liberals); and for the other, it is Labour's commitment to social justice. But Meg Beresford's desire to be involved in the last days of the Liberal Party as it shapes up for merger talks is a recognition that Labour alone cannot be the main political vehicle for nuclear disarmament. Her public membership will, she hopes, support Liberal disarmers, for the discussion on nuclear disarmament is stretching 'further across the political spectrum'. This is vital. 'If Labour gets in with its policy for British nuclear disarmament it will not manage to achieve it. If it does not have support further across the political spectrum, it just couldn't do it.'

Despite the election and Labour's current jitters about unilateralism, she does not admit to any discouragement. She thinks the support today inside the Labour Party for substantial progress towards disarmament is much stronger than in 1983, when CND was at its peak as a mass, messianic movement for saving the world. And the Liberal Party, she believes, is today where the Labour Party was then in its defence thinking.

But the signs here are more muddled. For in seeking a new role in Europe and a new role for Europe, is not the new party now being formed by the Liberals and the SDP majority pointing itself inescapably towards the Eurobomb, an independent nuclear missile system for Western Europe? And will this not therefore involve a process of rearmament, an addition to the nuclear pile, an escalation of the arms race? Is this not what Bob Maclennan hinted at in his speech to the Liberal conference? And will the SDP mergerites not press the new party to emulate David Owen's pro-nuclear stance and rhetoric?

That is the danger, she agrees. But not only is feeling inside the Liberal Party more strongly pro-disarmament than 'the arithmatic suggests' (meaning that some of the Liberals who voted against the anti-nuclear resolution at Eastbourne in 1986 did so as a gesture of support for Steel, not out of political conviction). More important is the simple desire of the new party to have a *new* policy on defence and on Europe; and 'nuclear weapons till kingdom come is certainly not a new idea'. Nor, one should say, is simply divesting oneself of them, especially when the idea is Labour's.

The third leg of her optimism rests on the Liberal's internationalism and the number of West European parties committed to nuclear disarmament. Perhaps it is the Labour Party's self-importance which has cut if off from the smaller West European parties, especially the Dutch, where so much of the new disarmament

IT'S VERY EXCITING THAT YOU'VE FINALLY RETURNED, JESUS!!
GEE, YOU'VE BEEN AWAY A LONG TIME!!
ALMOST 2,000 YEARS, SIR.
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thinking takes place (though, of course, the Dutch don't have their very own bomb to deploy, junk or use as a negotiating card). Meg as the ex-organising secretary of END (the organisation for European Nuclear Disarmament) is acutely aware of the links to be made between small and middle-rank powers like Britain. But as a new member of the Liberal Party, she is surely also aware that European Liberals are, by and large, a very right-wing lot, gung-ho free marketeers and gung-ho anti-communists? Yes, she says, it's a problem; but believes there are social democratic parties the new party can work with, despite their links with Labour.

The moral mantle

This, it would seem, is the least of their problems. She has to help find a role for CND members, whose numbers have fallen to around 75,000 from an estimated peak of over 100,000 in 1984; she has to help steer CND towards discussing a foreign policy without which talk of disarmament is merely a pious gesture; and she has to help answer that question: is unilateralism, even for its most fervent supporters, an irrelevant strategy for disarmament in the days of Gorbachev and Labour's defeats? She must *help* find the answers, because of course CND is a creature of grassroots activism where any sort of central leadership is watched with suspicion.

It should be said first that people in CND are much less preoccupied with the internal workings of political parties than are Labour's protagonists on defence policy. To view Gorbachev as an infinitely more significant factor than Labour's election defeat may be testament to CND's healthy internationalism and Labour's deadly insularity.

In 1983, when CND was the largest and most vigorous protest movement in Britain, when each crank upwards of the new consevatism appeared to be met with a leap in CND's activities, membership and moral hegemony, there were many activists who believed that it was up to them to save Britain from imminent nuclear destruction. The mantle of moral leadership fell on their shoulders and there were many who were impatient of the effort to heave it onto Labour's shoulders. Such a precious charge could not be entrusted to politicians. The conduct of the election debate on defence merely proved their scepticism.

But cruise missiles flew in and settled in their bunkers behind their concrete and wire barricades, our civil libeties shivered and retreated a little further, and Mrs Thatcher won two more elections. Trident grows towards completion and the world has not come to an end. CND is tired.

Like everyone else in CND, Meg firmly believes that without all that action Gorbachev and Reagan would not have been impelled to negotiate, and leaders like Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl of West Germany would have felt free to scupper negotiations if they could. Defence is now a highly political issue, instead of a matter of secret deals made by a handful of politicians and arms manufacturers on the advice of a handful of hawkish military men. More people now *want* disarmament.

That is the past achievement. What about tomorrow? The need to keep up the pressure is as urgent, says Meg, for two reasons. First, Western politicians will 'slip back' without it. Second, Gorbachev has to be allowed space to manoeuvre. He had a limited time in which to deliver, she says; and if he fails, the Soviet Union's hawks will push him out to resume an even more hazardous cold war, only this time with no hope of a new man from the East to break the log-jam. What the Western political parties should be doing is giving Gorbachev that space.

And what of those western political parties? For the sake of a more powerful alliance for nuclear disarmament, should not British unilateralism be dropped as a strategy? If unilateralism has made all the converts it can, if multilateralists genuinely want nuclear disarmament, as opposed to just wanting words to stop unilateral disarmament, should not CND do what the Labour Party cannot: find non-unilateral disarmament strategies which multilateralists can support with the energy and enthusiasm that CND members have brought to unilateralism? Would this not be the best step towards breaking the log-jam?

Such arguments depend on the belief that those who argue for the multilateral approach genuinely want nuclear disarmament; a world freed of its nuclear incubus by the year 2000. Most unilateralists don't believe them; after all, where are their disarmament initiatives, their organisations set up to pursue disarmament through multilateral means (as opposed to organisations of the right set up to pursue the evidence of Moscow gold inside CND). After all, CND members say that unilateralism is only a tactic — though one, others add, that has been elevated to a principle.

The easy answer

It is still a tactic with a lot of life in it, thinks Meg, despite its lack of an echo across Europe. It is a peculiarly British problem, because apart from France — and she points to the Anglo-French rivalry which 'is very near the surface' in macho men like David Owen — no other European nation has its own bomb. But yes, though CND will not drop its unilateralism, there is scope for work with multilateralists. She says they can jointly campaign for Polaris to be put into the negotiations (for that, after all, is the reason given by multilateralists for wanting to hang on to Polaris); and they can campaign to stop Trident, even at this late stage; for gaining Trident escalates the arms race.

This puts the ball back into the multilateralists' camp and calls their bluff. It seems too easy an answer. If one aim of CND is to hasten the process of disarmament before the arrival of Trident; and another to stop the move toward a Eurobomb skewing the foreign, defence and economic policies of Europe irreversibly towards war, cold or otherwise — then are not concessionary moves by CND more important than the moral unilateralism which holds it together?

To Jane Mayes, author of the 'challenges to unilateralism' paper — and to many other activists — the answer to firmly no. She only raised the question, she said, because she believes the 'hidden agenda' of the Communist Party, still with some influence on CND, is to question the 'moral' unilateralism of CND. She and many activists don't want to engage in the tactics of gradualism. For them, moral force is all.

But this seems to be unavoidable: if CND is to regain the initiative, it has to find ways of working with multilateralists and has to honour, not fear, the changes wrought by Gorbachev. It has to expand beyond its single-issue role to explore the foreign and economic policies which will make politicians tend towards a disarmament defence policy; it has to make more effective European connections to counter the momentum towards a Eurobomb — for, as Meg agrees, what Britain alone does will not have the consequences that Aneuran Bevan imagined 30 years ago. And it has to extend its influence beyond the Labour Party. All these suggest a more flexible CND, one which has the structure and money to survive in the way 1960s CND was unable to.

Perhaps that will come about as CND fails to sweep up new recruits into mass protest. And yet, without an electorate convinced that a Britain without nuclear bombs is better than a Britain with nuclear bombs, the most artful strategies are unlikely to wean away politicians from their deference in the face of the military and economic momentums towards more and bigger weapons, for use in an East/West conflict. That demands the grassroots campaigns and the drive of moral urgency. It is not within the power of CND leaders to provide it. Perhaps Jane Mayes is right. Gorbachev is bad news for CND chauvinists and Mrs Thatcher alike. □

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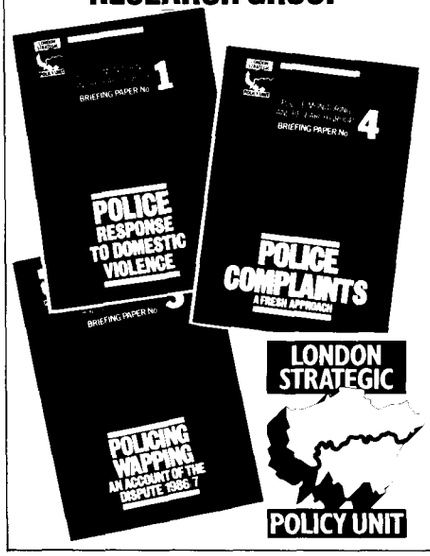

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ECONOMICS

Labour must stay in touch with the workplace

Roy Green

THE DEFEAT in June this year has thrown Labour into an even deeper depression than the catastrophe of 1983. True, the result was an improvement, but the fact that the improvement was only marginal despite a professionally competent campaign means that the policies were squarely rejected by most of the electorate. Hence, Labour's leaders have recently agreed to embark upon a wide-ranging policy review over the next two or three years.

It seems to be fairly widely accepted that the basic flaw in the current approach is the excessive weight placed upon the 'social conscience' of the majority, those self-reliant individuals occupied in gainful employment who have on average, according to statistics, prospered under the rule of the Thatcher governments. From this perspective, the collectivist elements in Labour's programme appear as so many measures designed to help minorities at the expense of the rest; an exercise in redistribution to benefit a few offers little to the majority save a soothing of its conscience, something which can be done more cheaply with some variant of the 'undeserving poor' theory. In other words, if Labour is ever to win another election it must define a majority constituency and appeal to its interests.

The basic problem for Labour here is the decline in the traditional working-class community which has in the past constituted its natural base of support. At least in the southern regions, Labour cannot win without attracting a degree of support from people who in this terminology would not consider themselves to be 'working-class'. This requires a modifying of traditional images and values to give the Party a broader appeal — does it, however, necessarily require acceptance of the traditional 'middle-class' ethos of competitive individualism?

The 'philosophical' expression of this movement is the doctrine of 'market socialism', although there are many differences of emphasis and detail within it and not all those sympathetic to the drift of the argument would willingly accept the label. Of course, acceptance of the basic principles of the 'mixed economy' is hardly a new phenomenon within the Labour Party, and if the concept of 'market socialism' involved no more than a rejection of public ownership as a universal ideal then it might be of little practical significance, since the ideal has played mainly a symbolic function.

However, the current debate is not merely a repeat of the 'revisionist' arguments over Clause IV because the 'market' represents more than an economic mechanism for the distribution of goods. It symbolises positively the principle of individual freedom — in short, individualism — seeking to accord it a central place in a redefined conception of socialism. As such, it has potentially far-reaching implications for the entire spectrum of Labour's programme.

WHATEVER THE apparent dictates of philosophical or electoral logic, in practice Labour's programmes must also accommodate the interests of its organisational base, the affiliated trade unions. As a matter of history, Labour has only been able to win elections and form governments at points when the political climate enabled it to develop a political and electoral strategy consistent with the interests of the trade union movement and based in large measure upon its economic power and political influence. This is true in Britain of the 1945, 1964-66 and 1973 elections.

'Market socialism' and the strategies which flow from it, however, is based upon exactly the opposite assumption — the continued debilitation of the trade union movement. Some evidence lends support to the thesis of a possibly permanent decline in the extent of union power. Since 1979, trade union membership has fallen by around three million and as a proportion of the workforce from 55 per cent to 46 per cent. Nevertheless, a substantial body of academic research suggests that popular views on the extent of union decline are considerably overstated and that organised labour remains a powerful organisational force which may well be able to consolidate and expand in the future.

> ***'The flaw in the current approach is the excessive weight placed on the social conscience of individuals'***

In the past, unions have been faced with just such a need to offset a decline in established sectors by organising new groups of workers. During the 1970s, white-collar unionism increased to about 40 per cent of total membership from a level of 23 per cent in 1948 and 32 per cent in 1968. During this period too, the favourable climate encouraged an overall growth in union density from 44 per cent to 55 per cent of the workforce, demonstrating the importance of political factors. It is scarcely possible, then, to make confident predictions about the future of trade unionism when there are so many different variable factors, not least of which are the strategies pursued by the unions themselves. The issue for Labour is whether in assuming and reinforcing a downward trend for the unions it is not also undermining its own political base. Is distancing itself from the unions a viable strategy?

Again, there is evidence which might suggest that the unions have become less important in delivering votes for Labour, so justifying a weakening of the traditional links. The proportion of trade union members voting Labour has declined from over 70 per cent in the mid-1960s to 43 per cent in 1987. But it does not follow that Labour should pay less regard to trade union interests in order to construct a wider constituency of support. On the contrary, the inability to retain its support in the trade unions should be seen as the root cause underlying Labour's electoral decline. The correct inference surely must be that Labour has been less successful than the unions in gaining support beyond the traditional working-class. Among the C1 (clerical) and C2 (skilled manual) groups, which constitute about 23 per cent and 27 per cent of the electorate, Labour's support in 1987 was only 24 per cent and 35 per cent respectively — far below the proportion of union members.

THE TRADE UNION movement is now somewhat belatedly concentrating its attention on the development of new organisational strategies, rather than fruitless attempts to influence government policy. A major challenge is presented by the growth in the part-time and temporary workforce and greater reliance on sub-contracting. Both NUPE and the GMB have published studies of exploited workers and appalling working conditions as part of their campaigns for fair employment protection laws. Not all employed workers are as robustly properous as general statistics may lead one to believe.

This type of campaign must be given a political dimension, both to secure necessary changes in the law and to change the climate and influence of unions. Labour can play an important part here, and in doing so, begin to rebuild its own political support. Indeed, many proposals along these lines are already contained within joint Labour-TUC documents such as 'People at Work', published in July 1986. However, little was heard of these during the election campaign, no doubt because opinion polls did not rate them as significant election issues. Perhaps it is inevitable that politicians, whose only access to the public is through the media, should thus be dominated in their calculations by their perception of public opinion.

Trade unions, however, can make direct contact with their members and the political fund campaign demonstrates how existing opinions can be transformed. Although surveys and polls conducted beforehand indicated that only about half of trade unionists supported links with Labour, an average 83 per cent voted in favour of retaining the political funds. Thus attitudes can be modified when an issue is put into a context of concrete workplace interests and the implications are properly explained. Yet a recent report prepared for Trades Unions for Labour admits that this experience was not used to any significant extent during the election campaign.

A strategy placing more emphasis on workplace interests could see Labour working with the unions in the interests of both. Such a struggle to change the political climate may seem in the short term less realistic than simply adapting policy to a superficial public opinion, but ultimately this will be the only basis upon which Labour can succeed in being elected to government. The alternative approach of 'market socialism' can only reinforce the existing unfavourable climate and generate internal conflict and paralysis within the labour movement. In the end it will prove no more successful than the doctrine of the 'moral majority' so enthusiastically promulgated before the last election. □

Roy Green is a research officer at the Labour Party and is shortly taking up a post in the Australian Labor government.

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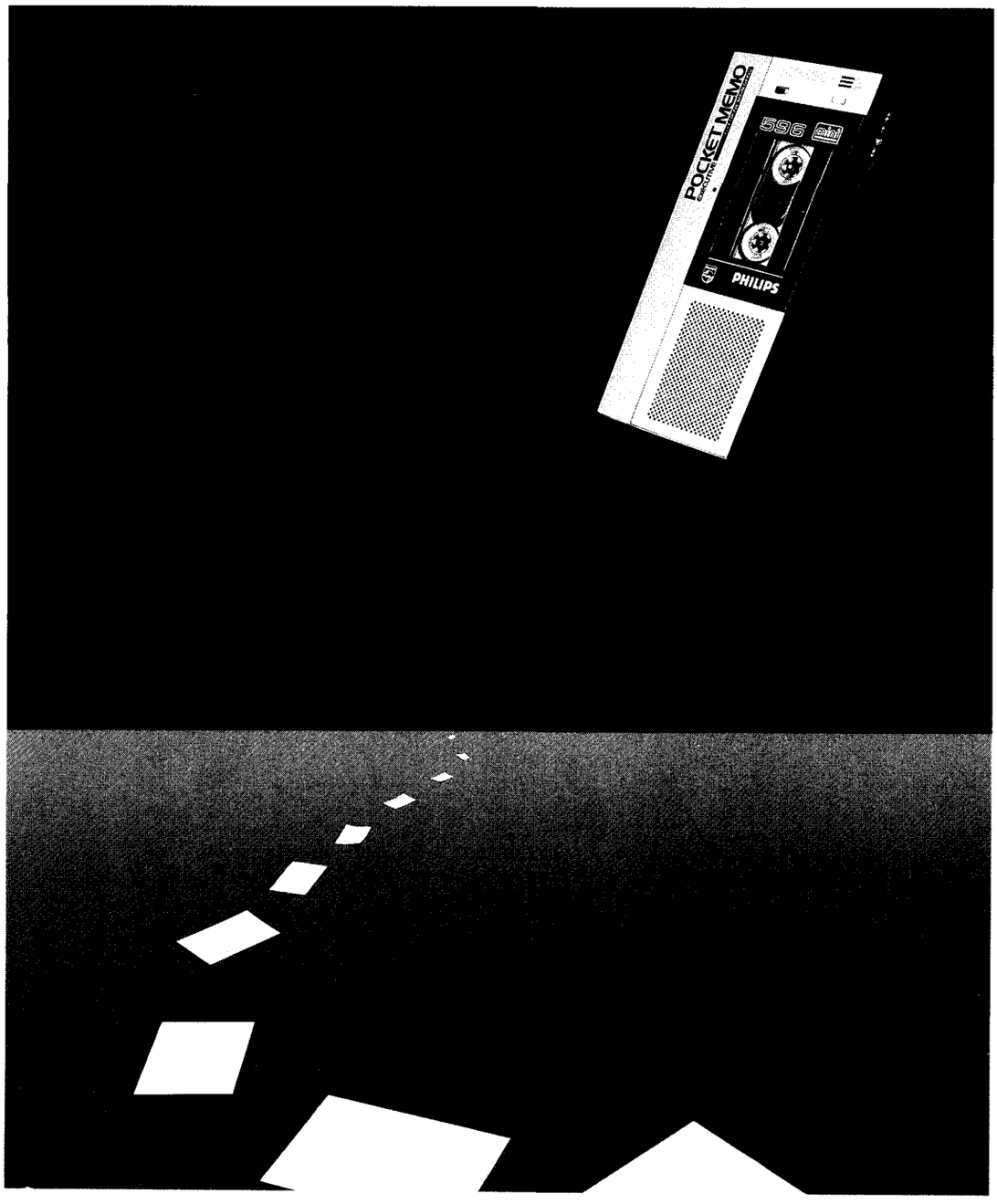

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Iran, Iraq and the superpowers

DILIP HIRO *reports on the latest signals from Tehran*

TWO INTRIGUING details of the American attack on an Iranian vessel in the Gulf last week stand out. It occurred on the eve of the speech by the Iranian president, Ali Khamanei, to the United Nations General Assembly. The United States navy scuttled the Iranian ship, secretly, in the middle of the night of 25-26 September — to the chagrin of the media representatives who had been rushed to the damaged ship four days earlier. It is hard to resist the conclusion that there was something fishy about the American operation.

Not surprisingly, critics of President Ronald Reagan detect in the Persian Gulf event echoes of the Gulf of Tonkin incident off the coast of North Vietnam on 2 August 1964: an episode concocted by President Lyndon Johnson's administration to win Congressional approval for a fully-fledged American intervention in the Vietnamese civil war.

This time the Reagan administration probably reckoned that its military action against Iran would make Iranian leaders so hopping mad that they would reject outright the UN Security Council resolution 598, and thus facilitate the passage of the American-sponsored resolution to impose a UN-sanctioned arms embargo against Tehran. But the Iranians stuck to their flexible diplomatic stance at the UN, and confounded Washington as well as London.

Unlike the previous Security Council resolutions on the Gulf War, the present one has *not* been spurned by Tehran. This is so because, for the first time, the ten-clause resolution 598 addresses the subjects of responsibility for the start of the conflict and war damages: the issues which Tehran considers crucial.

Who started it?

The question of who initiated the war is at the heart of Iran's behaviour. Tehran claims that Iraq is the aggressor, and that it must be punished. Until a third party carries out this task, Iran is bound, morally and legally, to struggle against the aggressor country and bring about the downfall of its ruler.

Having secured the inclusion of the issue of the responsibility for the war into the Security Council resolution, Iran has been pushing it to the fore. The seven-point plan that President Khamanei submitted to the UN General Secretary Javier Perez de Cuellar last week includes a *de facto* ceasefire by Iran to coincide with the appointment of an impartial commission to inquire into the origins of the war. If this body finds Iraq as the aggressor, then Tehran would declare a formal ceasefire.

The Iranian plan enabled Perez de Cuellar to argue, convincingly, that not only had Iran refrained from rejecting the Security Council resolution 598 but also it had softened its position outlined to him during his visit to Tehran a fortnight earlier.

By doing what Tehran did, it signalled to Moscow that it was taking seriously the latter's advice not to be intransigent and engage in diplomatic dialogue. In return the Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze publicly backed the idea of a UN commission to inquire into the origins of the Gulf War. (Interestingly, the Iranian proposition about an impartial body reportedly received the backing of Saudi Arabia, a staunch supporter of Iraq.)

Scepticism on arms embargo

There is another crucial point on which Moscow and Tehran are of the same mind. According to them, the American naval build-up in the Gulf violates Clause 5 of the Security Council resolution — which calls on all states to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation — and must be reversed. Hence Moscow's proposal for a United Nations force to ensure safe passage to neutral shipping in the Gulf.

The Soviet proposal was summarily rejected by the US State Department and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Their representatives at the UN — filled with moral outrage at an Iranian attack on a British ship and the American discovery of minelaying by the Iranians — tried to rush the Security Council members into drafting an arms embargo resolution against Iran.

But they failed even to win the backing of France, which recently severed diplomatic links with Iran and is a major supplier of advanced weapons to Iraq. As it happens, the French scepticism on the embargo is shared by West Germany, Japan and Italy, three important members of the non-permanent section of the Security Council.

Yet when the foreign ministers of the Big Five had a working lunch with Perez de Cuellar last Friday, Sheverdnadze agreed to let Soviet officials participate in the discussion of a draft on the arms embargo agaist Iran. This was a gesture to show that the unity of the Big Five on securing a ceasefire in the Gulf War was intact.

In any case it is the US which has come around to the Soviet stand on the Gulf conflict. When the war erupted seven years ago Moscow deplored it. Declaring itself neutral in the conflict, the Kremlin tried to help end it by stopping supplies of arms and spares to Baghdad, which was heavily dependent on them.

It was only after July 1982, when the Iranians marched into Iraq, that Moscow resumed weapons shipments to Baghdad. It did so under the 1972 Co-operation and Friendship Treaty with Iraq. According to this treaty, the two parties are required to contact each other in case of 'danger to peace' of either party as well as to 'develop co-operation in the strengthening of their defence capacity'.

No second fiddles

In contrast, the US policy on the Gulf War has been inconsistent and cynical. Having encouraged Iraq, through Saudi Arabia, to invade Iran, it declared its neutrality in the conflict. Later, it began supplying satellite and other intelligence to Baghdad via Riyadh.

Once Iraq had failed to dislodge the Khomeini regime and seen its troops expelled from Iran, Washington decided to help prolong the conflict. Its clandestine shipment of arms and spares to Iran in 1985-86 was part of that overall objective. It was only after Iran proved its military superiority by moving within six miles of Basra last January that alarm bells began ringing in the White House. Since then the US has been pushing energetically for a ceasefire in order to save Iraq from defeat.

For totally different reasons both superpowers are intent on seeing that Iran does not emerge victorious in the Gulf War. But the Soviet Union is, understandably, unwilling to play second fiddle to the US in the latter's campaign for an arms embargo against Tehran. This is all the more so when Washington pursues its policy of keeping the Soviets out of the Gulf, despite the waterway's proximity to the Soviet border, and ignores Moscow's repeated calls to withdraw its armada from the Gulf.

For its part the Kremlin has been advising restraint to Washington and Tehran. Were shooting war to break out between the two adversaries, the Soviet Union would have to take a clear stand, given its 1,200 mile-long common border with Iran. This could sour its relations with Washington at a crucial juncture in disarmament talks.

Iran is aware of the tensions and contradictions between the superpowers. So far they have managed to wrongfoot their opponents at the UN. Next they are expected to cause a change in American public opinion regarding the massive US naval presence in the Gulf while getting even with the Reagan administration on its attack on their ship. □

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MEDIA

Public service and popular taste

David Graham

IN HIS KEYNOTE speech to the Edinburgh TV festival in August, Phillip Whitehead referred to the Kipling poem about 'copy book headings' that get forgotten when the 'gods of the market' rule. One might have expected him to quote John Milton on the 'red dragon' of superstition and unthinking greed, but his choice of the Prime Minister's favourite poet was actually quite appropriate. For Phillip, I believe, hankers after late-Victorian values. The late '90s were a collectivist era. On the 'right' the hero of Tennyon's 'Maud' muses that it is better to join and go to war against a common foe than compete among ourselves. Ruskin preached the imperial role. On the 'left' Fabianism was born. Fabians were centralist and *dirigiste*. They were for prosecuting the Boer War with more determination. They liked Wagner. At their mildest, they were, pace Beatrice Webb, for government by an 'unassuming elite'. Phillip, as I understand it, is a Fabian.

In the last 40 years this powerful tradition has been questioned and, piece by piece, discarded. Its rise coincides with Britain's economic stagnation and decline. We know now that central planning doesn't work. We know that there is really no basis on which to tell other people what's good for them.

For these reasons, within the left, new voices are heard and they speak with more tolerance of the 'gods of the market'. They acknowledge that economic development is the work of many individuals and many attempts. They acknowledge that an open market, properly regulated, resists the power of special interests. Some acknowledge that the entrepreneur is the only known source of economic increase. A new revisionist socialism stands out like a green hill far away with (as yet) no route map to get us there.

This may seem a long way around to the question of broadcasting policy, but in broadcasting Fabianism survives. The gods of the market have names like Murdoch and Maxwell. Their images will rise like idols over a wasteland in the days when they come to power. The truth is that they are powerful men, among the few with deep enough pockets or enough nerve to invest in some very new, very tricky technologies.

To put the issue a totally different way: in order to survive, British television has to make good quality popular programmes. Television has a duty to the national economy, just like any other industry. To survive, it has to discover new forms of popular culture. It has to do this efficiently. If it doesn't, English language programmes will be made in other countries. If British television is not reformed quickly it will go the way of the Triumph motorcycle. It is, as Mrs Thatcher said recently, the last bastion of restrictive practices.

The problem with our industry is that it does not produce enough good quality contemporary comedy or contemporary narrative drama. These are the staple products of television's production base. It fails to produce these because it has not valued them highly and because it contradicts nearly everything that is known about the virtues of competition in a free market. Our output just does not excite viewers around the world. During the '70s British television reached its peak in international terms. Since then it has failed to generate images of Britain that excite or entertain others.

THE FRAMEWORK of reform I canvass has three objectives. It maintains an element of public service broadcasting, and funds it in the most secure way I can imagine. It introduces, as soon as possible, a strong dose of competition into the production of our popular programmes. And it perserves Channel 4 in the medium term, because it is performing such an important role.

Competition first. I believe that government should make it quite clear to the ITV companies at the next round that it would prefer franchises to go to publishing operations who buy their programmes from third parties. The 'vertical integration' of our system has provoked tremendous inefficiencies. ('Vertical integration' refers to companies who have a monopoly of a wavelength, making the programmes for that wavelength with their own production staff in their own studios. There is no competition in the production chain and very bad practice results.) I am also in favour of two competing popular channels, BBC1 and ITV1 being the obvious candidates. They should compete head-on, without public service obligations, financed by the sale of advertising.

> ***'I have no fear of the tyranny of popular taste. But the discovery of popular taste is an exercise obscure to the intelligentsia'***

This prospect doubtless appals many *New Statesman* readers, whom I would try to persuade that only in this way have we any chance of developing an industrial structure that can cope with the year 2000. In the United States, 50 to 100 independent companies produce popular programmes for the networks, and some, like the people who make *Cheers* or *Rhoda* or *Newhart* or *Hill Street Blues*, are supremely good at the job. Since markets, served by the free competition of individuals, provide such a powerful 'discovery procedure', this is the route, I would suggest, to discovering popular arts in the latter half of the twentieth century. Some will say that competition for the mass audience debases taste. Television, like all other popular art forms, has the objective of sending people to bed feeling good. People have very different tastes. But if we preach at our audience or make patronising programmes they will be listening to and watching someone else.

I could argue that this route will actually preserve public service television. The Peacock Report stated that there was a case for the preservation of programmes that we as taxpayers might want, but as consumers might not bring into being. Sir Alan Peacock meant such things as political programmes, some news, programmes for minorities, and so on. I would propose that the indexed licence fee currently assigned to the whole of BBC output gradually shifts to become the pool from which public service television is commissioned. Sir Alan Peacock was for dotting it around the channels. I would put it all on one channel. This would mean that BBC1 would gradually learn to finance itself by advertising. As long as the BBC exists in its present form it will spend most of its licence payers' money on popular programmes without really having the resources to compete effectively with a commercial channel. It will therefore pour money into defensive scheduling operation and its public service function must be neglected.

CHANNEL FOUR is currently having its future reassessed too. In a competition sense, Channel Four has offered many benefits. It has sponsored nearly all the independent production that has taken place in Britain, so showing the pattern for the future. It offers a unique window for the showing of independently-made, small-audience output, the only window for true entrepreneurial innovation I can see in the system. It if had to sell advertising, say the advertisers, its up-market youthful audience would be very desirable. I don't think they mean it. Young, upwardly mobile people are hard to find in a TV audience and the advertisers would want it to go down-market. It would seem better to sell ads on BBC1.

I would like to see a network of local stations producing local news. As well as the unsatisfied demand for national advertising there is, I believe, an unsatisfied demand for low-cost local advertising.

We hear much about the 'concentration of ownership' that will follow deregulation. I do not have space to deal with this issue fully, but concentration can be prevented by anti-trust provisions. I have never seen anyone demonstrate that cultural industries tend to concentrate. There may, certainly, be a tendency to concentrate within industries in cyclic decline such as the cinema and, until recently, newspapers: but in a volatile, expanding cultural sector new companies will always be knocking at the door.

And is this all just pragmatic policy stuff? Are there any 'values' at the heart of this exercise in the destruction of the status quo? 'Yes' I can answer, with conviction. A pride in our culture and a confidence in our ability to sustain it. That's why I have no fear of the tyranny of popular taste. Ever since it started our public television has been driven by a mission to improve. The not-so-unassuming intelligentsia made it their home. The discovery of popular taste is an exercise obscure to the intelligentsia, who are a conservative cultural force, educated in the thinking of a previous generation and determined to exploit their cultural capital. The intelligentsia would not have taken you or me to the Globe at Southwark: they would have taken us to a court mask. There was lots of rubbish around in Shakespeare's day; there's a lot in ours — but we don't really know what is rubbish and what is not. This honest doubt, so foreign to the 'unassuming elite', is one price of living in the present. □

David Graham is executive producer of Diverse Production Ltd; he was one of the broadcasters who talked to the Prime Minister on the future of broadcasting last week.

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The battle to be normal

Former heroin user **TAM STEWART** *tries to explain why people take the drug and sweeps aside some common myths*

WHAT IS IT LIKE being addicted to heroin? The first thing you notice is that you wake up in the morning late, aching all over from sleeping too heavily and too long in one position. Your eyes will be watering. You feel rotten, just rotten. You can barely be bothered to get out of bed, no matter what. Then you remember. Realisation dawns. You need and you want drugs. Soon. Immediately. Later you will try to keep in a supply for the morning, but in the early days you may not bother, thinking you will be able to do without, thinking you can hold on until later. Before long your first waking thought is always heroin and your first act to smoke, snort or inject the amount needed to get straight, often without getting out of bed if you can manage it.

Once you have had a hit you can function. Things look brighter, better, how much so depending on the dose you have had. Your thoughts can then turn to other matters — like scoring again as soon as possible. For most people, the worst thing about the whole business is finding the money. Without it they cannot buy the drugs to keep them feeling well enough to lead their normal lives. That is what addiction means. Without heroin, a regular user will become ill, listless and depressed, and will be unable to carry on his or her usual, everyday activities, not least of which might be earning a living. Carol, a married woman with children, summed up the situation when she said, 'I take it just to be normal; to do the washing; cook the tea; do the housework; go to Tesco's, just to be my normal bloody self.'

Drug addiction is not a static condition. Even for dependent users there are degrees of addiction. Users may try to keep their habit down to a minimum level but to experience the same feeling of being stoned they will need to continue to increase the amounts they use, taking larger and larger doses. The fact that a person's tolerance continues to grow, and grow indefinitely, is probably the origin of the belief that, in time, junkies cease to enjoy taking heroin. What actually happens is that, once tolerance has developed, the majority of users cannot afford to buy the amounts of junk needed for them to get really stoned. If they are lucky, they will be able to get themselves straight. Often they are on the edge of withdrawal, not because the drug no longer works on them but because the dose they need is prohibitively costly. Life becomes a battle to be normal, to be well enough to carry on.

Most junkies have huge debts. At first when things start to get out of control and the bank has given up on them, junkies borrow from friends. Initially, making excuses about unexpected bills, then brazenly admitting the truth, begging for clemency, understanding, and more to the point, help. Junkies can develop a good streak of cynicism, especially about their own promises. They ask to borrow money in the persona their friends knew: they accept it under a new guise. The 'old you' would have paid it back promptly, the 'new you' might never do so. As one friend said, 'The road to addiction is paved with good intentions.' Small debts are usually paid, but the big ones can hang over you forever.

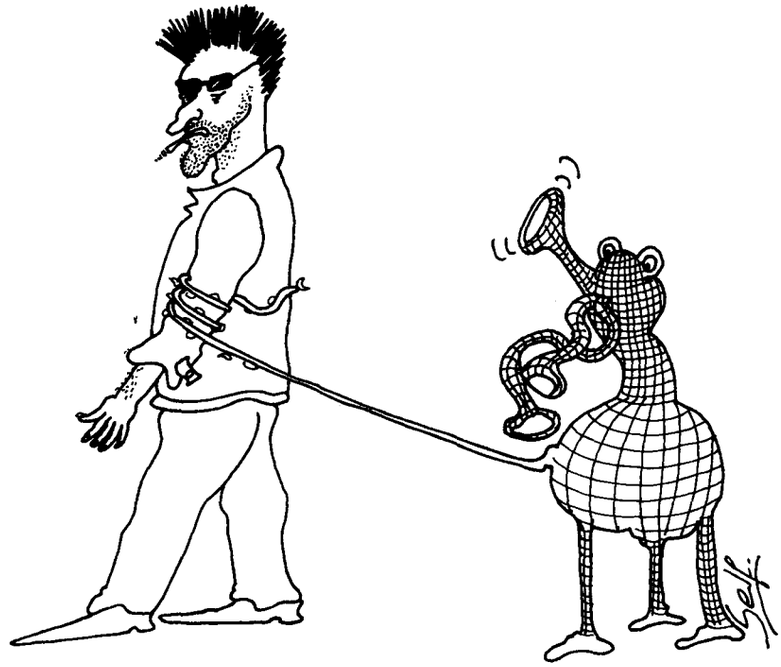
Until I started my book I did not talk much to other heroin users about the lengths they went to in order to get the money, but now I know that most of my female friends who are addicts have pawned or sold their jewellery. A couple have sold their wedding rings. Junkies cannot afford the luxury of sentiment. It is little wonder that, when faced with the choice of daily humiliations, some people prefer to start dealing in smack to finance their habit.

Working people who buy their way into a heroin habit soon face problems holding down their jobs. Students flunk their courses and drop out. Paul was a student when he started taking drugs. He had smoked cannabis for years but when heroin came into his life, he found he could not concentrate on his studies. He left college and worked full-time at the hunt for heroin.

It is possible to carry on with your job, however, and I know junkies who have remained employed in the same jobs over periods of ten years and more. What the public does not understand or, perhaps, prefers not to acknowledge is the fact that heroin addicts are at their most comfortable and efficient when they have a steady supply of the drugs that keep them 'normal'. In that respect the comparison with diabetes rings true.

> ***'There is the common assumption that addicts want to be cured. They do not. They want to take drugs, but will accept a cure as a last resort'***

A remark attributed to London Stipendiary Magistrate Mr Crowther by the *Liverpool Daily Post* (16 April 1985) bears out the fact that even the judiciary can fail to comprehend the real situation of the heroin user. When sentencing a man convicted of possessing heroin he told him, 'How disturbing it is to know that heroin was in the car you intended to drive that night.' The misguided magistrate must have been equating heroin with alcohol. In reality, the thought of an addict trying to drive when he had *not* taken heroin is far more



"Take me to your dealer . . ."

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The cannabis connection

I cannot leave the question of how people come to embark on a career of heroin abuse without considering that old chestnut, the claim that smoking cannabis plays a big part in leading on to the use of hard drugs.

The direct link with heroin addiction has never been proved, and yet a lot of circumstantial evidence is erroneously and, perhaps, unfairly used against cannabis. Society has attempted to trace the path of the heroin user back to the point where he 'went wrong'. Somewhere along that path, the careful observer will probably find a joint. He assumes, therefore, that the heroin user has built up his daring and his confidence with lesser drugs before moving on to smack. The path has been painstakingly tracked in the wrong direction: backwards. Most dope smokers have never tried smack. On the other hand, most people who take heroin will try anything.

Thus I do not believe that cannabis plays a part in forming a heroin habit. There must, for example, be millions of cigarette smokers who have never discovered cannabis. The progression from the use of one drug to another is not inevitable. Of course, smoking cannabis may possibly enable those who use it to come into contact with people who use heroin. This is not a foregone conclusion. The dope and smack scenes are usually quite separate. Some junkies like a draw now and again, but many more do not bother. The dealers who operate at street level do not usually sell dope as well as smack. They are too busy coping with their heroin supply to bother worrying about something else.

Most young people who form the tragic new wave of heroin takers have had little or no experience of cannabis. For many kids, heroin has been their first indulgence. Indeed, during attempts to quit heroin, users will sometimes seek out cannabis as a crutch to help them through. It can actually lead you away from hard drugs rather than towards them. ●

disturbing. The onset of withdrawal can render the user clumsy and careless beyond belief. At this stage you can bump into things, drop things, or convey your coffee cup straight to the middle of your chin rather than up to your mouth. Driving is positively hazardous. You are 'all fingers and thumbs', crashing gears, and failing to notice red lights or respond to emergencies. Spatial judgment deserts you. Your nerves are shot to pieces and your eyes watering so badly that you can hardly see the way ahead. If possible, therefore, junkies will make sure of their supply of drugs befor planning any sort of activity. Not only does heroin give confidence; in regular users, it is essential to competence.

What misleads observers is the junkie who gets stoned when she should only be straight. If the addict takes a measured dose, she will be 'normal' and function effectively. If she takes more and gets stoned, she can, for practical purposes, be equated with a drunk. The user is always fighting the temptation to over-indulge. The use of an excessive dose of heroin will make a person drowsy and addled. The second problem for the working junkie is, therefore, gauging the dose that will give optimum efficiency without causing her to 'nod off'. The experienced addict nearly always manages to get it right, but no one is infallible.

I know of one long-term user who drives an ambulance for a living. I called to visit his wife one day at around 2pm in time to see the ambulance pull up outside. He staggered out, barely able to stand, and told me, in slurred speech, that a social worker friend had shared some heroin, leaving him too stoned to drive. He had somehow managed to get home and had written off work for the rest of the day, leaving the ambulance where it stood, right outside his house. I could not resist a smile at the insane anarchy of a social worker and an ambulance driver in collusion that way: the blind leading the blind. Those with eyes open must be aware that much of life is not what it seems. In the junk world, chaos rules. These occurrences are comparatively rare among working junkies, but it's not surprising that employers want to get rid of a junkie found on their staff. Even junkies despair of other junkies at times.

Exit family and friends

As heroin takes precedence over all else, you start to become uncomfortable in the presence of old friends who will make demands on you and confront you with your old self. You, therefore, cut them out. And they tire of you. You do not seek out your former friends as you can never afford to make arrangements in advance, knowing you may need to score. To them you become distant, cagey, standoffish, erratic and downright unreliable. Junkies seek only the company of other drug users because they expect nothing and make few demands. Any unusual behaviour is accepted as normal by other junkies. Everyone shares the same understanding that 'gear' comes first. Scoring is the most important event for all. People unite in the cause. Whatever you do junkies will not be shocked. Among them you are at ease and free. With others you have a dark, difficult secret to conceal. The gap between you and the rest of the world widens, a chasm finally opens up and you are on the other side.

Users all speak about losing credibility and the respect of others. Paul explained the way that friends drift out of your life: 'You lose credibility because you become unreliable in other people's eyes. People who called round regularly to see you suddenly visit more infrequently till you don't see them at all.'

Tony revealed that he had been hurt by the rejection that telling his friends had brought. He confided:

> One of the bummers is if you tell a friend and decide to reveal your life-line secret you usually find if they're close — or you thought they were — they just agree with everything you say. Then they go away and weeks or months after you've revealed your little secret you find they didn't understand anything. They just think you're a self-indulgent creep.

He carried on to expound his theories on why non-users find junkies so hard to cope with:

> You break certain social conventions and so people think you're dotty. It would be all right if you could just be yourself and go out of the room for five minutes when you wanted to. That's where all the myths come from about drug addicts being more weird or aggressive than everyone else. Ordinary people think that if you leave the room you've got to say where you're going. You might be doing something. You might just be getting carried away — having a wash and deciding to wash the sink for instance.

He chattered on, desperately trying to justify the stoned junkie's obsession with irrelevant detail as 'normal' behaviour. His attempt to make his actions seem sensible foundered as he continued,

> When you're with people that are straight they get pissed off. You think, 'I can't tell them I've been washing the sink at half-past ten at night when I've got company,' because they they can't fucking handle it. By the time you've thought that, someone says, 'Where've you been?' Then you're in a right pickle because you've got to think of a good lie. Immediately. You know you shouldn't have cleaned the fucking sink. The lie is worse than the truth. You say something like, 'I had something to do outside.' Nobody believes you. They all imagine you've been taking more drugs or doing something weird and you feel even worse.

Making a choice

A lot of assumptions are commonly made about heroin users. Among them is the notion that addicts want to be cured. They do not. They want to take drugs, but when the going gets rough they will accept a cure as a last resort. Some are, of course, sincere when they say they want to stop but they are in the minority. It is usually circumstances that generate a choice. Arrest, overdose, illness or another crisis can precipitate the decision to give up drugs. Once discovered, addicts are expected to seek a cure. In this way they can atone for their sins against public morality. Society expects them to repent, and since the path to public exposure is usually through the courts, addicts often comply.

When he leaves jail the addict cannot wait to be reinstated as a normal, healthy, happy young chap ready to fight the noble fight against degradation and unemployment. Sometimes he believes in his own reform but he may be equipped with no more than a cheery smile and a wholesome determination to stay straight. He sets out clutching a crisp, new UB40 to his temporarily drug-free heart.

Privately, he wages an ongoing war against the urge to relapse. The longing for heroin grows like an unseen virus until it bursts out and common sense is totally laid waste. In truth, he cannot wait to be a junkie again. Junkies are doomed to repeat the pattern over and over again until something jolts them out of the cycle.

Many addicts either say or imply that the offer of a job would be the answer to their problems. Some feel that without a job to go to the effort of stopping would be wasted as they would only drift back to drugs.

Few addicts recognise the need for inner change. Most cite concrete goals like jobs or large sums of money as the things that would make them stop. But it certainly does seem true that without a degree of soul searching, the discovery of new insights and motivation for change is impossible. Most addicts do not have much self-love. Perhaps the answer lies in finding out that you are ordinary and learning to forgive yourself for not being special or unusual.

Addicts sometimes need to be reminded of this. Before they can succeed in a cure, they have to believe in themselves. They have to learn to disregard the destructive and unhelpful aspects of the picture that the media and public paint of them and, perhaps most importantly, they need to have a vision of some sort of desirable future life to aim for and work towards. Without that, any cure is very unlikely to succeed. □

This article is extracted from Tam Stewart's book, The Heroin Users, *published by Pandora Press, £5.95.*

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ARTS

CINEMA

The circus comes to town

Judith Williamson

La Dolce Vita (18) *Hampstead Everyman*

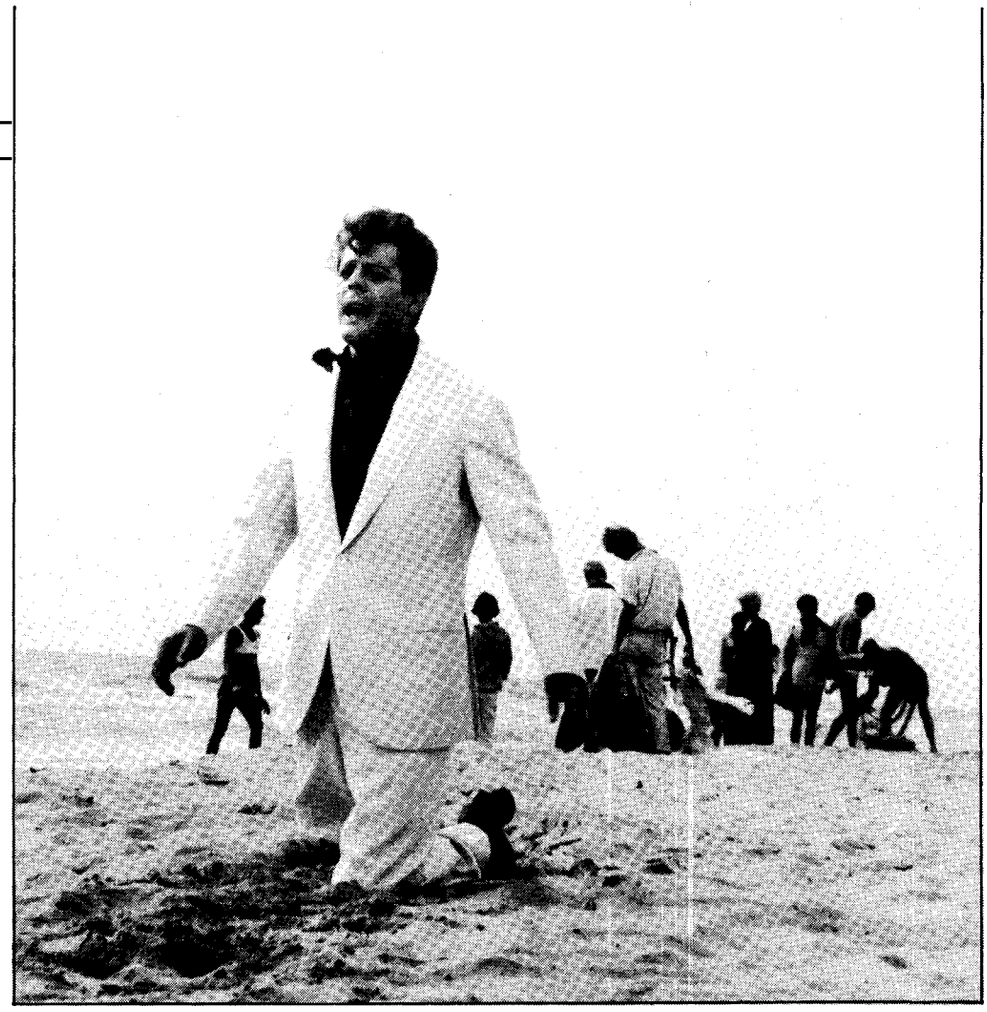
AN ENORMOUS FIGURE of Christ swoops across the Roman sky — its shadow climbing the side of a modern housing block. Centuries of meaning detached, suspended; and this floating signifier — a statue on its way to the Vatican by helicopter — flies fast enough to produce a buzz, the speedy thrill of transport combining with the heady dislocation of fixed values.

This is the opening sequence of *La Dolce Vita* — itself described as the film which opened the 1960s. Fellini's first big-budget film was seen on its release both as shocking and as a savage indictment of the 'good life' as led by Marcello Mastroianni's roving journalist and his sophisticated Roman friends. Yet seeing it again today — particularly after *Ginger and Fred* — its concerns seem to prefigure that postmodern sense that now accompanies the '60s revival.

From the very first shot the film deals in both spectacle and the exposure of meaning: the statue with its empty blessing is echoed later in the 'miracle' sequence where people eager to be photographed are left stuck in ridiculously devout poses unaware that the cameras have moved on. This is a world — our world — where the film star Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) goes back into her plane to re-emerge for better effect, her smile a series of publicity stills. Long before the word hyper-real was being bandied about Camden Lock — in fact before many of its users were born — Fellini had pounced on that phenomenon of larger-than-lifeness it refers to: Sylvia is welcomed to Rome with a giant pizza.

La Dolce Vita is also known for having 'no plot', instead following a series of incidents in the journalist Marcello's life. But these function in a very precise montage. Fellini cuts from the flying Christ of the opening to a masked Egyptian dancer, opening the next, night-club scene, giving them a kind of equality: everything is a facade, Marcello hides behind his shades and, as the masked dancers slide off on a moving floor — the kind of effect Fellini loves — a woman with a mad hat starts jiving. All these phenomena from Jesus to jive are somehow levelled by the equivalence of presentation. Again and again Fellini uses cabaret acts to empty out historical meanings; in one club where the waiters wear Roman togas, Sylvia, Marcello and a motley group of friends go into one of Fellini's typially Chaucerian parades, and their shadows surge up on the Roman 'tents' in an odd overlaying of histories. When Marcello's father takes him to an old-fashioned night spot, the show includes '20s numbers and circus-style acts whose rustiness seems quaintly 'authentic' — but they are still performance.

As in *Ginger and Fred*, the ultimate circus is that of the media and this is shown most clearly in the scenes at the site of a supposed miracle. Huge spotlights surround the 'holy tree' where two schoolchildren claim to have seen the Virgin, giving the feel of a football ground at night; villagers cluster round it praying (Oh Lord, make me win the Lottery) and then suddenly it starts to rain. The lights have to be cut, and chaos ensues when the children decide to 'see' the Virgin in all directions at once and the holy tree is torn to shreds.



The party's over for Marcello Mastroianni in the re-released *La Dolce Vita*

This moment is like a forerunner of the power cut in *Ginger and Fred* which plunges the TV show into darkness — in both cases the media 'hyper-reality' is paralysed and the disorder it masks is briefly apparent. But *La Dolce Vita* differs from contemporary 'postmodern' analyses of the media in its sense of a *desire* for meaning — or, at least, for there to be more than just surfaces.

And Fellini's phenomenal achievement as a filmmaker is to make you feel, simultaneously, that thrill of the play of surfaces and the desire for more which fuels its movement. I find it very hard to give a sense of *La Dolce Vita* without reference to music, for its stunning, black and white imagery wheels before your eyes to repeated themes that go round and round like the music they play at the circus when the performers march into the ring: 'there's more, there's more, there's more' it seems to say, with a mixture of yearning and resignation.

Fellini is able to make film produce that same effect; music and movement create 'highs' that are not just the kicks of an idle society but, in a way, the expression of a wish for something more. That wish surges up again and again in *La Dolce Vita*, in its peak moments — at the top of a cathedral, in the middle of a dance — and is repeatedly let down — most drastically in the famous scene where Marcello and Sylvia are frolicking in the Trevi Fountain at night. Dawn comes and the water is abruptly switched off: nights of intensity give way to mornings of banality.

The episode with Marcello's father is a much deeper let-down; this encounter also fails to deliver the depth wanted from it, for not only does the old man's *bon viveur* act end in a heart tremor but Marcello's attempt to talk sincerely to him fails. The facade doesn't hold — and then neither does the authenticity sought beneath it. And it is in its sense of the *poignancy* of these failed-authentic moments that *La Dolce Vita* differs from the postmodern position that doesn't seek authenticity at all. Given how fashionable the '60s have become, it will be interesting to see how this film is received, with its stylish summer nights, open-topped cars, café awnings and beautiful people. But *La Dolce Vita* pursues the sweet surface of city life right to its edges: both the waste lands that surround it and the 'abyss' that Steiner — the calmest character — feels within it. The richness of this brilliant film is that it reproduces the thrill of urban existence precisely while mourning its lack of substance.

At the end of the last wild party, the cast spin out of the frame to the circussy theme tune, Marcello like a ringmaster throwing feathers over them across the screen: Fellini's virtuoso ability to combine a moving frame and movements within it creates the film's last brief moment of giddy excitement. In daylight the revellers stumble onto the seashore, drained of their glamour, to find a beached whale — its great eye still staring, like us at this washed-out spectacle.

Yet the film ends with a quite different image, that of the innocent, angel-faced girl from Perugia who recognises Marcello from across the shore and shouts out to him. He neither recognises nor hears her; but the camera finally rests on her face,

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completely devoid of cynicism. If anything distinguishes the film from the sensibility it portrays, it is this final, touching image of openness and sincerity; and if anything stands between the retro-chic present and the past it purports to revive it is probably that same image, unthinkable in a film of style today. □

THEATRE

Royal engineers

Victoria Radin

A Question of Geography
JOHN BERGER and NELLA BIELSKI *The Other Place, Stratford*
The Taming of the Shrew
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford*
The Revenger's Tragedy
CYRIL TOURNEUR *Swan Theatre, Stratford*

A QUESTION OF GEOGRAPHY adds a dour footnote to the unofficial Eastern European season now obtaining at the Royal Shakespeare Company, with Ostrovsky, Vaclav Havel and the Chernobyl play *Sarcophagus* (at the Mermaid from 7 October). It is the first work for the stage by John Berger and his co-author, Nella Bielski, a Russian novelist who has lived in France for 20 years, and its subject is the Gulag, allied to the bigger themes of deprivation, 'unfreedom', uprooting and migration that have marked most of Berger's work.

One of its central characters, in an echo of *A Fortunate Man*, is a medical doctor, a profession for which Berger holds a special awe. But awe permeates the authors' attitude to most of their characters, who are too good to be true or interesting.

The focus of this group of intellectuals, all imprisoned under Article 58 as 'enemies of the State', is Dacha (Harriet Walter). As I try to describe her she sinks through the paper, for she, like the doctor Eric (Clive Russell) with whom she lives, is less a person than a collection of virtues — stoicism, gentleness, magnanimity. She is shortly to see her 16-year-old son for the first time in 15 years when he arrives for a summer's visit.

We come to know Sacha, the son (Linus Roache, an impressive newcomer), as a likeable and plausible adolescent; but initially he is the stranger through whom the authors inform us about a closed community. His reunion with his mother, which should be a key dramatic moment, is frittered away in the lifeless theatricality of the script's demand that they stare at one another across the stage for ten minutes while conversations go on around them. Once seated side by side at the dinner table, neither looks at the other while Sacha (and the audience) is regaled with information about the camp from the other guests, a deaf violinist (Mark Dignam) and a twitchy economist (Susan Colverd) who quotes poetry. No one thinks to ask Sacha about himself, though their manners are meant to be exquisite: here, as in many points of the play (published by Faber at £3.95) dramatic logic comes into conflict with the authors' need to instruct.

Eventually a simulacrum of a relationship develops between mother and son, culminating in Sacha's refusal to leave the camp and return to Leningrad. I was moved when Sacha, having watched his mother abruptly taken off by the 'Bruise', or guards, elects to stay and try to make a home for his stepfather. John Caird's production is good on the wordless and casually brutal scene of Dacha's re-arrest; and Harriet Walter manages the several other silent scenes with captivating dignity. But dignity shadows the piece, squatting on it like a toad: the victims of tyranny don't need special pleading.

Since he left the National Theatre a decade and a half ago, Jonathan Miller has periodically bitten at the bejewelled hands of the two big subsidised houses who weren't feeding him. His production of **The Taming of the Shrew** is the first he has mounted for the Royal Shakespeare Company (or Royal Insurance Shakespeare Company, as a large injection of cash has virtually re-named it) and it represents a happy departure from the house style. This style has a good deal to do with 'contemporaneity' — or 'relevance' as some folk call it, the same people who would regard any non-feminist production of *The Shrew* as gross indecency. It is not enough that the play is written as a kind of spoof, being the dream of a drunken tinker; but Kate's final speech of obedience must be seen as an hilarious private joke between the couple and/or a source of excruciating embarrassment for Petruchio.

In Miller's staging (incidentally, his third attempt at the play) Fiona Shaw does the speech for real — though not quite going so far as actually to kiss Petruchio's foot; and Brian Cox is visibly moved by it. When he is moved, so are we.

Miller does away with the Induction, or Christopher Sly's dream, but keeps an echo of that framing device in the band of masked Commedia musicians who play in front of a little curtain which is whisked away to reveal Stefanos Lazardis' gladdeningly delicious set of an Italianate *trompe l'oeil* street scene. Kate comes down its stairs bellowing and staggering, her body askew, wielding a pair of scissors over her jagged hair, 'curst' in the other sense. I thought she fell in love with Petruchio at first sight, his being evidently the longest conversation anyone had held with her in years; while he for his part quickly progressed from desire for her dowry to a reflective interest in her potential both as a woman and as a person.

Fiona Shaw is a lot younger and somewhat taller than the rather weary-seeming Brian Cox, but the physical mismatching helps Miller's thesis that you have to work for what you get in a relationship, which is itself embellished by the work. Felicity Dean's bad-tempered, Sloaney and boozing Bianca has everything given to her, including her father's and her suitors' love; having carelessly chosen a husband, and perceived love as a game of petty power, it is Bianca who is revealed in the final scene as the real shrew, her marriage already cold and dead and distant. Kate and Petruchio, however, have seen the raw side of one another; and when they go off to bed at the end we know that their understanding will enrich how they are there.

In a sense Miller has given us a battle between the Yuppie and the humanist, between cant and an original approach to life, and he has let the more sympathetic (and less fashionable) side win. What he is discussing is a much larger issue than who kisses whose foot/takes out the rubbish.

Di Trevis has been imported from the National Theatre for her first RSC production in a main house; her roots in the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre are everywhere in evidence in **The Revenger's Tragedy**, which she does rough, tough and jagged, but visually exquisite. Designer Michael Levine (also from the Cits) dresses everyone in whiteface and dripping, trailing, post-holocaustal diamantéd rags; Antony Sher (who's toned down his act since I last saw him) acquires a hennaed punk coxcomb when he changes his identity to avenge his beloved's death. Henna seems a kind of moral colour key: the Duke and his villainous entourage sport red and a terrifying moment is achieved when Julie Legrand's licentious but oddly sympathetic duchess has her cherry wig pulled off, revealing her white wisps, horribly receding. Nicholas Farrell is rather charming as her bisexually greedy son.

Tourneur loves to link death, sex, disguise and villainy in this appealingly lugubrious play, and I loved Phil Daniels croaking out 'Old Dad dead?'. But Trevis has the last word by concluding that a new crop of villains will crawl forth destroying Tourneur's neat and patly conventional final restoration of order. □

PHOTOGRAPHY

Stage management

Liz Heron

True Stories & Photofictions
Camerawork until 9 October, then touring until June 1989

PICTURE-MAKING, rather than picture-taking, has become the more honest description in recent years, admitting to the fictional manipulations of what was once regarded as an innocent activity. But this show, organised by Sue Beardmore of Cardiff's Ffotogallery, concerns itself with the deliberately constructed image whose fiction lays no *claim* to social transparency.

It brings some quite new work together with several of the most noted US exponents of what's been dubbed the 'directorial mode'. One of the best known is Duane Michals, who has grown steadily in importance and influence since he first began exhibiting in the '60s, notably his speculative narratives on how the individual imagination heightens or transforms perception in its states of sleep, reverie or erotic desire. Although his new sequence here, 'Women Live in Liquids', seems devoid of the ironies to be appreciated in earlier scenarios concerning women and male desire, as an artist stretching the possibilities of photographic narrative he remains the most interesting contributor to this show.

In contrast with Michals' elegant, cerebral enquiries, dream worlds enacted in externals, the dreamscapes of the French photographer Bernard Faucon are intensely interior, constructing a poetry of the senses in their play of colour and light within bounded space: the cold brilliance of a snowdrift in a blue and gold room; a spreading

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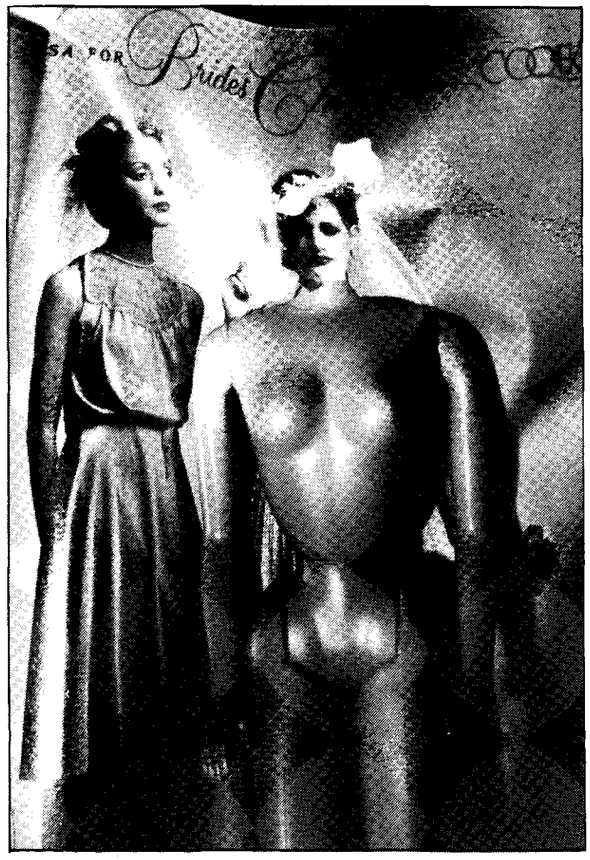

Joyce Neimanas' 'Brides Choice' (1980): every picture tells a story in the 'directorial mode'

glimmer in darkness; the devouring flare of flames — these from the series 'rooms of love'. His only other piece here catches sun dazzle across an open field where multi-coloured washing blows on a clothes line. Each stunning image lets the viewer's mind wander in a narrative engagement, albeit one very different from that exercised by Michals' work.

One of the problems with this show is that so many artists can only be scantily represented. Even with one of the 13 catalogued participants absent, and with some editing of the original Ffotogallery show, in the cramped Camerawork space the arrangement fails to do justice to some of the work. It's annoying enough having to peer at Duane Michals' delicate writing in a dark corner, but it's positively hard viewing unfamiliar work on the basis of so little, especially when seen in a literally bad light. I liked Barbara Crane's enlarged colour slides, with their unsettling, almost mythic perspectives of distance on ordinary scenes — like a wedding spied on from afar — but they hang too high and draw too many reflections from the gallery entrance directly opposite.

What makes these three — Michals, Faucon and Crane — so interesting is that they are all working with narrative in a distinctly filmic way, shaping the enigmatic as distinct from the rhetorical or allegorical statement; although, for its uneasy atmospherics, Ralph Eugene Meatyard's 1964 'Wall Mask Series' certainly fits the former category.

Les Krims' garish commentaries on the American dream, so hectically packed with minute paraphernalia that they have to be seen at original monumental size, share a certain satirical impulse with Ron O'Donnell's photographed constructions of consumer detritus. O'Donnell's apocalyptic humour makes for the curt one-liner (Nuclear Wasties, The Four Minute Warning) while Krims' tableaux come with cultural layers that seem appropriately excessive.

Both occupy a different aesthetic universe from Joel-Peter Witkin, whose visions of deformity and sado-masochistic pain provoke both revulsion and fascination. While these dark perversions resonate with Poe's ambience of nightmare fulfilled, the Catholic iconography and the allegorical titles recall Goya's Caprichos. But it's less what the author's imagination has produced that shocks than the paradoxical fact of photography as evidence here; Witkin's effect of old, worn negatives suggests another level of horror, that of the Victorian freak show.

Calum Colvin's photographed assemblages impress with their flamboyant virtuosity and the humour of their kitsch decor with its ubiquitous tartanry and its digs at art history. Joyce Neimanas gently criticises gender stereotyping.

It's hard to see what brings them all together. All work in the 'directorial mode', with fictional set-ups rather than documentary or portraiture, but that framing term is loose. Some of the set-ups use dummies, some use models/actors or anonymous individuals, some just props and sets. But there surely has to be an evident *mise-en-scène*, whether still-life or theatrical, to justify this label, which is what makes Pattie Carroll's collages a puzzling inclusion.

And a lot has happened to the 'directorial mode'. Constructed photography has been increasingly adopted by photographers in Britain and not a few former documentarists. Interestingly, the North American emphasis in the show is all the more underlined by the two Scots taking part, O'Donnell and Colvin, who recently won the Bradford photography prize. Transatlantic influences have mattered much more to photography north of the border than to what's been going on this side of it. What's more, it has stayed within the confines of fine art that were gradually breached down south through the last decade's cycle of engagement with documentary and community, with feminism and the politics of representation — though now partly reinflected towards fine art.

It's a separate territory that's been marked out here and, even if this interjection into the photographic scene comes rather belatedly, when there's so much else it doesn't reckon with, there's plenty here to provide the pleasures of reassessment and comparison. □

CENSORSHIP

No musical excess

Jon Savage

ON FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, colour printers at the *New Musical Express* refused to print a small reproduction of the inner sleeve for the Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* LP which was being used in a 'banned covers' feature. This image, a puddle-coloured, Escher-type geometric of pricks going into bums by *Alien* designer H. R. Giger, called 'Penis Landscape', had already been the subject of intense litigation in the USA, where the week before singer Jello Biafra had been acquitted in Los Angeles County Court of 'distributing matter harmful to minors'. *NME* Editorial agreed to delete the image, despite the fact that in America, at least, it had been given a clean legal bill of health.

On the Monday, IPC — which through its subsidiary the Holborn Group publishes *NME* — decided to pull the complete seven-page feature — called 'Pop Babylon' in homage to Kenneth Anger — of which the banned covers piece was a part. The two people most directly responsible for the feature, Art Editor/Designer Joe Ewart and Media Editor Stuart Cosgrove, were — despite the fact that the offending article had been removed before printing, let alone publication — suspended for 'a serious error of judgment' and, last week, were paid to resign from the paper.

A simple enough saga you might think, if embarrassing to IPC — neither editor Alan Lewis nor Holborn Group publisher Andy McDuff were available to make any comment, even on the facts — but it raises some interesting questions. It seems clear from the facts that the Dead Kennedys poster was not the only thing at issue: as important was what sort of magazine *NME* — still the IPC's music press flagship — was going to be.

NME is one of Britain's two longest established weekly music tabloids: the other is competitor/stablemate *Melody Maker*. On the face of it, *NME* is a paper in decline — circulation down to 87,733 in Jan-July '87, as opposed to 104,648 in the same period last year, and an early decade high of over 200,000. It has been hit by an overall trend to glossy pop/style magazines and, most recently, EMAP's boys' pop magazine, *Q*. Yet the paper still makes a lot of money — advertising usually accounts for nearly half the

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page space — particularly as there has been little IPC investment since the early '80s and wages are comparatively low. It's safe to assume that *NME*, like *Melody Maker*, has a core readership of profitability, but that it may not be delivering to IPC the readership profile that they want.

The fall in circulation seems to have concentrated IPC's minds on what sort of paper *NME* is. Ever since the late '70s *NME* has had an explicitly left-wing editorial line. The effect has been mixed: its politics have often been self-righteous, exclusive or simply inappropriate, which has prevented the paper from getting the wider support it needs from within the music and publishing industries. On the positive side, it has resulted in a paper that correctly sees the often hermetically sealed world of pop and pop culture as part of a larger social and political process, and which is not afraid to report on important and controversial issues: a recent series of reports — ironically — on censorship and the activities of New Right Fundamentalists, by Steven Wells, being a good example.

Historically, *NME* has been protected from the close attentions of IPC both by its circulation and a series of strong editors. This has resulted in a peculiar, playpen-like situation for its contributors who have been free to offer extreme and contentious (and, occasionally, very funny) opinions in a kind of vacuum. Yet *NME* — like virtually all the writing about pop in this country — is founded on a contradiction: the fact that it is funded by the music industry, to which it is merely a service.

IPC's shoddy treatment of its two *NME* staffers is the end result of a period of surveillance by the company. The paper's declining circulation isn't the only reason: music press writers are ever prone to conspiracy theories but it seems clear that *NME*'s political line is, at best, not what IPC wants and, at worst, an embarrassment to both IPC and Reed International — the paper has recently been in trouble again over its use of swear words. It's certainly ironic that in attempting to comment on the only New Right cultural discourse worth the name — that of censoring the most blatantly, colludingly 'shocking' material — *NME* should have fallen into its trap and made itself vulnerable.

It has been fashionable to deride *NME* and certainly the paper's worst excesses have won it few friends. But it's now time to re-emphasise its many good qualities and its importance as an intelligent, informed and lively paper. Despite the actual nature of 'Penis Landscape' (basically, revolting) and the paper's extravagances, I would absolutely support its right to print the offending item and to take the political line that it does. Yet that right has to be fought for: it would be a great loss if *NME* were to go the way of a music/style press generally becoming depoliticised or, in the case of *The Face* or *Blitz*, steadily moving rightwards. If there is one good thing to come out of this farrago, it will be that music press writers realise that the days of the playpen are over and, in acknowledging the full contradictions and implications of their position, can develop a more reader-friendly, rooted politics of the music and media industries. □

A benefit to cover the Dead Kennedys' legal costs is being held tonight (Thursday) at the Hackney Empire, from 8pm onwards, £5 a head.

TELEVISION

Women drivers

Julia Neuberger

I COULD NOT RESIST the Channel 4 programme (in association with the Open College) entitled **Women: The Way Ahead — Life After Children**. I wanted to see what was on offer, but, fascinating though it was, it was marred by that didactic, talking-down manner typical of educational programmes geared specifically to women, even when made by a woman — Jane Chapman, in this case.

Yet in it we saw an experienced child-minder talking most intelligently about the responsibilities of parents and child-minders one to another. And we heard the question asked, ever so subtly, 'Why don't you think about becoming a child-minder too?' It was not put so directly, you understand, but there it was — an opportunity for women.

Though I would not wish to denigrate child-minding as a profession, I was far more taken with our next option, provided by Mary Stonehouse from Bristol who is a roofer and plumber and, apparently, single parent of five children. Like so many women, she has regrets about not getting properly trained earlier in life — she would have liked to be an architect. The highpoint of the programme, however, was Jane, now helping at a school in Chepstow, student of the Open University, dependent on her educational opportunities for her sanity. For she had the most tragic of stories to tell: a child who died, a cot death, at ten months, and another who died of cancer as a toddler. With one surviving daughter, the courage of this woman who tries to help others in more normal circumstances was extraordinary to behold. Though not the point of the programme, this was the only section that escaped the patronising approach and, therefore, was the only part really worth watching.

Far more convincing about the gradual equalising of women's role with men's was the new **Business Daily** (weekdays, Channel 4). I watched it twice, trying to learn about the new financial world and vocabulary, and saw gifted, intelligent women holding forth with authority. We had Susannah Simons, Jane Alexander and — perhaps most impressively, since she is not part of the team — Dr Elizabeth Butler, analyst in the city, whose comments about the government 'manipulating' the next lot of trade figures, so that the BP share offer goes well, were neat acid delivered in tones of honey. The men were impressive, too, and — with the exception of an odd muddle about inserts on Friday and a horribly visible earpiece on Mark Rogerson — the programme is a great success.

One of its competitors, **The City Programme** (Thames, Thursday), is less impressive: slower, slightly less sharp and, with the exception of a fascinating inside look at the Moscow Narodny Bank, a trifle predictable. Its best feature was a section called the Rose report, with Simon Rose, editor of the *Shareholder*, making an appeal for financial documents to be phrased in clear English. Shades of arguments about lawyers. Haven't they learned yet that the professionals make it incomprehensible in order to get more work for themselves explaining it?

Most interesting, however, were the ads between the two halves of the programme. Steam began to rise from the top of my head as we heard a line about 'This driver gave women drivers a bad name' with crazed figures rushing about dressed up to look like the Warner Brothers version of the Iceni. And who was the woman? Why, none other than Boadicea. Since she had not taken out the appropriate insurance, when the inevitable crash came she became a pedestrian. How appalling. That should put us all off Eagle Star for life.

So it was with great pleasure that I turned to the best of this week's TV, the exceptionally fine **Courtroom Crusaders** made by the *Heart of the Matter* team on the Christic Institute in the USA (BBC1, Sunday). The Institute is a public law firm run by a group of people who proclaim themselves wholly motivated by their religious principles and who take on some of the cases no one else will handle — whether getting compensation for deaths at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan of individuals who died while the police looked on (as at Greensboro', North Carolina), or getting compensation for Karen Silkwood's family after her ostensibly mysterious death. They take on the small private individual's case against the large corporations or the State, and they very often win. Helena Kennedy presented it with great sensitivity, in difficult circumstances. The opposition to the work of the Institute was rather curious (there could perhaps have been some more cogent material here) but Ms Kennedy displayed little irritation. Instead, she showed the firm in a

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sympathetic light, asking them what sort of cases they take up. They are now working on an alleged huge plot run by a gang of ex-CIA officials and ex-generals who, they allege, have got their own version of what US foreign policy ought to be. There have been threats of reprisals, but meanwhile they are pooh-poohed by the establishment, in the shape of another ex-CIA officer, George Carver, of the Centre for Strategic Studies.

Fascinating though the actual cases and allegations and counter-allegations were, to me the most moving part of the programme was the firm's definition of religion. It's not just what you do in the Temple (synagogue) on a Saturday, or in Church on a Sunday, according to Father Bill Davis of the Institute. 'If religion has no role in politics, then what is religion?' Quite so. If the religious groups are not concerned about social justice in American or British societies, when that is what they preach, then what hope is there for the rest of the society? Kent Hill (of the Institute of Religion and Democracy) was wrong when he argued on the programme that, if the Church gets involved in such issues, people will not listen to the Church. The truth is that when the Church only reflects what the government or the society of the day wants to hear, then people will stop listening seriously. That is one of the reasons that an established Church, with its representatives in the House of Lords, is such a danger, though the complacency of many other religious groups is even more disturbing. □

Hugo Williams will be back in this slot next week.

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Honours among artists

Naseem Khan

THIS WEEK'S COLUMN, the last Work in Progress, opens in a fitting manner with brass fanfares, much solemnity and a lot of doffing of caps. The occasion that it marks is a grand one: the ceremonial honouring, in the old centre of the Painters' Guild, of 'persons of eminence' in the arts. It might, suggested the Chief Executive of the award-giving body, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), be construed as a mild criticism of current government anti-humanist trends.

On a certain level, however, the government would have applauded the CNAA ceremony — a heritage event if ever there was one. There's no razmatazz so august as academic razmatazz, and this one began with the processional entry of multiple academics, in marvellously clashing robes, escorting the eight persons of eminence like lambs to the slaughter.

First to be awarded were a handful of extra research degrees, but then the CNAA got down to its mutton: the transformation of Zandra Rhodes, Jeremy Isaacs, Bryan Forbes, Janet Baker (absent with flu), Margaret Harker, Owain Arwel Hughes, Peter Brinson, Ian Tregarthen Jenkin and Louis van Praag into Doctors. One by one each stood in front of the assembly, beneath the glittering chandeliers and array of oils of past monarchs, while their particular sponsors described their virtues. This was clearly a trying moment. Margaret Harker dealt with it by beaming delightedly at the audience through her thick specs, but her co-Doctors — even the magenta- and violet-haired Rhodes — stood impassively in their gold and cream robes, and mediaeval black hats with gold tassels, as the praises rolled.

It is easy to be scornful of awards, which so often seem to be signs of sycophancy rather than of real worth. But the CNAA's stress on the arts is a welcome one. Encompassing, as the ceremony did, the worlds of design, television and photography, as well as the more commonly considered arts, it showed a useful and sensible pragmatism. Nor were the people chosen — with the possible exception of Jeremy Isaacs, who probably has a cupboard stuffed full of prizes — among the over-decorated. The choice, in particular, of Peter Brinson was very well judged. Founder of the Royal Ballet's 'Ballet for All', director of the Gulbenkian Foundation and now at the Laban Centre, where he pioneered the first community dance course in the country, he has always combined the urge to popularise with the most rigorous and principled of standards. There must be many who will remember his support — as I do for the early days of MAAS — and be delighted that he received recognition.

At the same time, however, the CNAA awards started me thinking of other recipients for honours in the arts. The three years in which I have written this column have taken me round the country in search of innovation. They have been extraordinary years, not without their lighter moments — discovering storytellers in the midst of a gale in Cromer; flying a kite in the most silent community festival ever, on top of a Huddersfield hill; listening to the excellent music-hall duo, Cosmotheka, in a small Northumberland village. The lesson of it all has been a very basic one: the arts are an unpredictable, far-reaching and powerful force. They can spring up in all sorts of situations and they speak about survivalism, humour and an urge to communicate. In an age where we are being constantly tidied up by government, the independence of mind they demonstrate is vital. The arts are not marginal, but central to the business of living.

This being so, I am, in parting, going to hand out my own Work in Progress honours. They are accompanied, alas, by no brass trumpets, but they come with appreciation for people and organisations that have managed, to different extents, to push back the boundaries and to provide an always needed reminder of the narrowness of the usual definition of the arts.

Notting Hill Carnival: An umbrella term that stands for a loose grouping of clubs, societies and groups who turn out designs amazing in their vision and meticulous in their execution.

Mayfest: for not having lost sight of the fact that a festival should be rooted in the people rather than be simply a prestigious source of tourist income. An extra cap with tassels for Grace Grant who has developed the presence of the festival in the estates of Glasgow.

ENO, and especially David Sulkin, for a programme that has not so much brought opera to children as has brought children's insights to opera. The Young Vic season earlier this year, with its operas devised, written and performed by children, was without doubt among the most invigorating events of the year.

Hospital Art, and especially Peter Senior's team, which has turned art usefully on to institutionalism, and produced some cracks.

Jim Lloyd for his work in spreading the knowledge of folk music and dance on the radio and during his shot term at the EFDSS.

Caroline Hutton and *WRPM* for sorting out a distribution service for women's music, and to *Turnaround* for doing the same for radical books.

The Labour Party for at last getting its act together and finding a credible arts policy. May it have the guts and sense to stick by it.

Finally, thank you to all the people who've put me up on sofas or spare beds in order to keep the *NS*'s expenses down, and to the many more who've given me help, support and criticism over the last three years. No ceremonies, no hat doffing — just thanks. □

Naseem will continue to write for the New Statesman's *Arts pages, covering policy and trends in those areas that Work in Progress has done so much for three years to support, but will no longer be doing a weekly column.*

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Books

THE LEFT

Matters of life and death

Tom Nairn

Labour: A Tale of Two Parties
HILARY WAINWRIGHT *Hogarth/Tigerstripe* £5.95

Clifford Harper

THE AIM IS a midwife's manual to help get a new left born. 'The Labour Party had always seemed to me to be a conservative party', is the author's irresistible first sentence. And her conclusion — based on an admirably wide survey of the movement in the year before the last election — is that Labour may now be pregnant with something better: the old body will survive Thatcher if only this can be got out and put in charge.

There have been so many phantom pregnancies in the movement's past that caution is demanded. Personally I can't recall a time when the other, new-model party was *not* being excitedly revealed as on the march. Sporting a CND/END badge since the '50s, its collective profile has wobbled uneasily between that of the Freeborn English-person and the more saturnine features of Leon Trosky. But, as the wave of the future, it has always been due to break in the shape of a new set of MPs: next time round these paragons would crash through on to socialism's beach, sweeping aside the flotsam of interest-rates, Parliamentary deference and the Labour Peerage. Once there, socialists would be spared the pitiable scenes Tony Benn is currently recounting in his *Diaries* (vol.1):

> *October 21 1964*
> The ceremony of admission into the Privy Council. We were greeted by the most awful stoogey-looking people, real Crown-Office-House of Lords types . . . We had to kneel on a footstool before the Queen and assent to the Privy Council Oath which had a real Mau-Mau quality . . . I left the palace boiling with indignation and feeling that this was an attempt to impose tribal magic and personal loyalty on people whose real duty was only to their electors . . .

But (he explains) one went through it for the sake of the Party, and because being a Privy Councillor is 'the greatest honour in the Parliamentary field'.

If Hilary Wainwright's tale of two parties were merely a further instalment of this oppositional myth it wouldn't be of much significance. But it is a great deal more. The author's vantage point derives from *Beyond the Fragments* (1979), the influential feminist critique of British Socialism that she wrote with Sheila Rowbotham and Lynne Segal. Her idea, then, was that the new 'politics from below' of the women's movement might provide a model for transforming the sectarian backwardness of the sub-Parliamentary left. Later she worked with the Lucas shop stewards on their 'alternative corporate plan' and then, from 1981 to 1985, inside a second great sub-Parliamentary movement, Ken Livingstone's GLC. Together these have given the impulse for what is in effect a traveller's tale of British Labourism. This 'obstinate refusenik' finally joined the conservative party in order to traverse its dim hinterland with notebook and tape-recorder: few villages remained unvisited and five pages are required at the back to list the natives who helped.

She voyaged too late to see the old way of life. In Reg Prentice's constituency in Newham North East, most 'members' had long been with their Maker and ward meetings were an almost forgotten ritual. Reconstructing all this with the veterans, she asks how it could have been that the mild, grass-roots reforms attempted there drove Prentice into the Tory Party and provoked such 'blustering, self-righteous resistance, not only from the party leadership but from the wider national political élite'? Unlike many previous analysts, the author doesn't find an answer in depravity versus good intentions: the fact was that the reforms *did* threaten the national élite via its Labour Party component. The latter stood for Benn's 'tribal magic', while the changes — because they came uninvited and from below — represented political democracy outside Parliament and 'in this sense are "republican" in spirit, seeking to treat people as potential citizens'. The same is true of the women's movement, the left-wing GLC and Black Sections: while both apologists and foes have tended to focus on the content of such trends, it is actually their unruly form which threatens. No one up in the club objects to sanctioned agitation from below stairs or out in the stableyard: it's unpatronised militancy outside the drawing-room door which causes all the trouble.

Another term for this is 'popular sovereignty' — the principle of almost every constitution in the modern world, save that of the UK Crown. Here is the paradox so neatly observed by Wainwright: reviving a ward meeting to de-select an MP means trying to join the modern political world. But the older world we inhabit isn't having it. This isn't a question of either the turpitude or the stupidity of leaders, but of inherited historical structures. Democratising the Labour Party menaces Parliament and (as she concludes) 'the fundamental problem facing any attempt to challenge the power of the Parliamentary leadership is the weight of the state's presence on Parliament'.

The mumbo-jumbo that so upset the young Benn is an inward transference of allegiance from the people to a state-form both incorrigibly anachronistic and (in survival terms) uniquely successful; it's letting you in, and the real membership-subscription consists in behaving yourself. All representative states demand responsibility from their elected, but this is a

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special boy-scout version. Her Majesty's leigepersons live by cooption, patronage and wisely collective solicitude from above: no more damnable interruptions from down in the kitchen. When she finally draws up the balance-sheet of her 'Party in Waiting', the author comes as near to despair as she is capable: in the early 1980s Benn's reforming opposition within the movement lost because 'the left . . . was using the alleyways of the Labour Party as a short cut to the kind of change which needs a movement down the High Street'.

Her proposals are for transforming the Party into such a democratic High Street movement: a project which, in the light of this book's own analysis, must appear extremely remote. The route to her vision passes by a consideration of the 1983 electoral disaster, a survey of Labour's local government experiences in London, Liverpool, Sheffield and Scotland, and chapters on 'Women and Blacks' and 'Unions: Business or Politics'. In the latter she is fairly caustic about the basis of Labour's own Old Corruption, the block vote. But, in view of the current caperings over one-member-one-vote (OMOV, as Peter Kellner has appropriately christened it) she must regret not being more so. Though well aware that the effect of the 1981-2 reforms has been 'to immensely strengthen the position of the Leader', the Gogolesque possibility of 633 Electoral Colleges for keeping OMOV at bay did not occur to her (nor would it have done to any modern political mind).

Labour: A Tale of Two Parties depicts Labourism in collapse within the tightening vice of Thatcherism, a portrait all the more vivid for a persisting Candide-like strain in its author. Too shrewd and theoretically informed for the old Tribunite opiates, she still wants to believe in rebirth. Something good has to come out of so many and varied strivings for a new democracy. All explorers through these alleyways are confronted with a moral choice between the naive optimism which sustains the tribal magicians, and the bottomless pessimism seeing only 'beyond' them to a Utopian nowhere. Hilary Wainwright inclines to the former, indicating yet not quite facing the non-apocalyptic conclusion her evidence so powerfully suggests. Any new British Socialism will have advanced, 21st-century democracy as its pre-condition; and, whoever the executioner turns out to be, this is far more likely to be built upon the cadaver of Labourism and its Privy-Council State than to emerge from their historical womb. □

Tom Nairn's The Glamour of Backwardness *will be published by Hutchinson next summer.*

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FICTION

On with the show

Boyd Tonkin

The New Confessions
WILLIAM BOYD *Hamish Hamilton* £11.95

WITH HIS USUAL *chutzpah,* the late John Huston called his memoirs *An Open Book*. It was, of course, nothing of the kind. He spliced the edited highlights of a picaresque past as deftly as in any of his movies. A fitting testament, perhaps, for a virtuoso of the Hollywood genres, with their plain tales swaddled in layers of artifice as thick as the wrapping round the Maltese Falcon.

William Boyd draws John James Todd, narrator of *The New Confessions*, as a Hustonesque figure enraptured by the drama of his own history. A Scots-American director as old as the century, he mixes maverick populism with avant-garde ambitions. From a Mediterranean island in 1972, he looks back on the chances and choices that tugged him from the steepling tenements of Edinburgh's Old Town to the Western Front, Berlin, Mexico and California.

Another genre piece, then: the artist's life, strewn with obsessions, triumphs, betrayals, foresaken wives, elusive mistresses, dumb producers and vindictive rivals. Moreover, Todd models himself on his namesake, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, arch-*poseur* of the Enlightenment. Time and again he returns to an unfinished trilogy of *Les Confessions*, the great white whale of his film-making career.

This unreliable witness lets Boyd play a double game.

Through one filter, *The New Confessions* looks like a mass-market romp, stuffed with intrigue and spectacle stretched across several cultures and generations. Paperbacked in time for next year's hols, it would make a perfect beach-book. To say so should be no more of an insult than to recognise when a Todd-like director sticks to the grammar of a Western or a thriller. At the same time, Todd's status as a self-deceiving sage hitched to an industrial process (as Rousseau was bound to the whims of patronage) opens the way for the novel to explore the pitfalls of authenticity.

Boyd lends his narrator a pawky, sardonic wit that scans everything from the carnage of the Somme to the McCarthy purges (Todd claims to be a pioneer victim, the Hollywood One). His gift for arresting minor characters comes closer to Ealing Studios than to Evelyn Waugh: the pustular mathematical genuis Hamish Malahide; the Expressionist heroine Doon Bogan, Todd's lover; the Armenian moneybags Aram Lodokian, a.k.a. Eadweard Simonnette. Behind them, Edinburgh, the Flanders trenches, Weimar Berlin and '40s Hollywood flank the reminiscences like neatly painted sets. These are landscapes of the mind, already ploughed by modern folklore and by film itself. Like Oscar Wilde's Impressionists changing the colour of sunset, Todd practises a craft that skews for ever the vision of its consumers.

Here we should back-track to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Les Confessions* are a sublime fabrication. Candour in autobiography paints a mask more impenetrable than any reserve or evasion. So it is with *The New Confessions*. Every revelation makes Todd an emptier vessel, a man acting the part of himself. Trying to squeeze his odyssey into an axiom, he offers lame gestures in the direction of quantum physics. Bathetically, he decides that life is 'deeply paradoxical and fundamentally uncertain', like a school film club baffled by *Citizen Kane*. Todd is the showman — or shaman — consumed by his own image: a stock figure in cinema's reflection on itself from Dr Caligari onwards. As his story ends, we await the death of the *auteur*.

Todd rarely speaks of his art. When he does, he uses a vivid, exact maker's language. His oeuvre spans the Abel Gance-like multi-screen experiments of *The Confessions, Part I* in the dying days of the silents and the '60s surrealism of *The Last Walk of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (ranked just after *Un Chien Andalou* and *Last Year at Marienbad* in a buffs' poll, 'off-beat and avant-garde' section).

It says a lot for William Boyd's own illusionistic skills that Todd sounds as if he merits a retrospective season and dossier from the NFT. Otherwise, Boyd remains a self-effacing English comedian, sugaring his dose of ideas with a generous glaze of black farce, nifty dialogue and funny foreigners. Never less than nimble and clever, he sometimes seems to stop himself becoming more than that. As they say in the business, that's entertainment. □

FICTION

Screen dreams

Nick Caistor

Pubis Angelical
MANUEL PUIG trans. ELENA BRUNET *Faber* £9.95

MANUEL PUIG HEARS VOICES. These led him, first, from his native Argentina to Cinecitta, Rome, in the mid 1950s, where he began to write screenplays for the cinema. Soon, however, he found that the voice of an aunt from back in provincial Argentina came to him, overflowing the limits of a film script and leading him to write his first novel, *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*. From them on, a number of highly successful novels have followed, but in them Puig has always remained faithful to the two things he has seemed to be trying to get away from: Argentina and the cinema.

They are both essential elements in the latest of his novels to be translated into English: *Pubis Angelical* (which received its first Spanish

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publication in 1979).

In the book, Ana, a middle-class Argentine woman, is in a clinic in Mexico following an operation. We are in 1975, when guerilla violence in Argentina was already being met by unacknowledged violence from officially organised paramilitary groups, and Ana has had to leave in a hurry for Mexico. One of the threads of the novel consists in the dialogues Ana has with two visitors.

Beatriz is a Mexican feminist friend, who tries to get Ana to question her view of her role as a woman and, in particular, her relation with her mother and her daughter, Carla. Her other visitor is Pozzi, a former lover and now mixed up with the guerrillas, who wants Ana to use her illness to lure another influential ex-lover to Mexico, where the idea is to capture him and hold him to ransom to secure the release of some left-wing leaders back in Argentina. When Ana refuses, it is Pozzi who reveals to her that she has terminal cancer, topping that by informing her that she 'despises women' and that she will not have her mother and daughter with her since 'you scorn them because they are female'.

This suggested inability of women to relate to each other, and to seek instead the love and admiration of their ideal man, is also reflected in Ana's diary. Here, she rather fitfully records her attempts to find the perfect love, only to come to the conclusion that she has never understood men at all.

The third level of the book takes us back to the cinema.

We suppose that, under the effects of the drugs given her to deaden the pain of her illness, Ana dreams these cinematographic fantasies, once again centred round this question of a woman sacrificing herself for the man who is her ideal love, but who ends up imprisoning her. The first of these involves the most beautiful actress of the 1930s, who is held prisoner in exquisite luxury by a fabulously rich German industrialist straight out of Visconti's *Twilight of the Gods*. By a series of improbable adventures, the actress manages to reach Hollywood, only to find herself imprisoned again in her condition as star.

As Ana's health worsens, her dreams/nightmares involve a vision of the future after the nuclear holocaust. The protagonist of this fantasy is a woman known only by her number, W218. Once more, she is betrayed by the man she loves and eventually contracts an incurable disease. When she is in the death ward, a neighbour has a vision of pure womanhood saving the world (hence the *Pubis Angelical* of the title).

All this sounds very sombre. But, however seriously Puig is questioning gender assumptions and behavior his voice is never a solemn one. (A great deal of the irony and playfulness unfortunately succumb to the translation: but it must be extremely hard to capture Puig's archness.) As ever, he is interested above all in the way in which people limit and imprison themselves — whether literally in prison, as in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, or in a clinic, as here — and how, at a moment of crisis, they try to grasp how they have built that prison around themselves. And the typically teasing ending of *Pubis Angelical* suggests, perhaps, that very few of Ana's emotional insights — or, indeed, those of any of us — are more than screen deep. □

FICTION

Oh my darling

Nick Kimberley

Blackeyes
DENNIS POTTER *Faber* £8.95

JESSICA IS A MODEL whose life has been turned into fiction by her uncle, Maurice James Kingsley. The book's success revives his ailing literary career, but Jessica's not pleased with what he's done with her experiences. Blackeyes (her fictionalised name) ends up drowning herself in the Round Pond at Kensington Gardens. No wonder Jessica plots revenge, rewriting the narrative in real life, producing a new ending.

That's the skeleton of *Blackeyes*; the three narratives (Jessica's life, Kingsley's novelisation of it, the real-life rewrite) produce a fourth, the novel we're reading. Towards the end, Potter reminds us that 'the present writer' is using Kingsley's story just as Kingsley used Jessica's. Wheels within wheels; Potter doesn't want us to forget that fiction is artifice. But artifice at a price: at one point, Jessica wonders, 'How many times . . . would allegedly sympathetic accounts of the manifold ways in which women were so regularly humiliated be nothing more than yet further exercises of the same impulse, the identical power?'

Good question; but there's a bit of self-congratulation here, as if Potter were saying, 'I know how these terrible men work, girls, but you can count on me to do it differently.' Yet in order to achieve that purity of intent, he has to play lascivious games with Blackeyes' modelling career. To chastise the awful male novelist, he presents us with Maurice James Kingsley (who has three names, while Jessica has only one, and Blackeyes almost none), an old windbag who peppers his speech and prose with orotund quotations. But, of course, Potter's the only one who can identify all the quotes, and has to alert his less erudite readers by doing a Kingsley himself.

I should say that this is all done with skill. Potter layers his narrative so that we're never sure which of the four (or more) stories we're reading. His years of TV experience show up in the way he uses televisual devices: voice-overs, dissolves, flashbacks. Potter's favourite trick of using familiar tunes to cut across the story is here too:

High brows raised here.

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'Clementine' crops up throughout, a theme-tune with no particular purpose.

Perhaps the story would best have been told on television. The jocular irony that runs throughout would have had to find a more subtle form; the presumably deliberate recourse to cliché ('Clementine', a clumsy romantic interlude) might seem less glaring; and poeticised infelicities (a sentence with the words 'silver . . . sliver . . . slither . . . shimmer' in quick succession) could disappear altogether.

But we haven't got a TV play, we've got a novel — one which, while bemoaning the fate of women in men's fiction, still achieves narrative symmetry by sacrificing Jessica. And one which, in order to explain away Kingsley's grubbiness of spirit and Jessica's vengefulness, takes refuge in Jessica's childhood experience of sexual abuse, replayed in hazy flashback. The mistreatment of women has to take the form of physical trauma, whose Freudian resonance does nothing to explain the spectrum of abuse Jessica suffers. *Blackeyes* teases us with its knowingness, dazzles us with its virtuosity, but in the end is only a hollow act of auto-deconstruction. □

CHILDREN: 0-5

Play it again

Hilary Wilce

Books for children create more fuss than you'd ever imagine possible. There's Jenny Lives with Martin and Eric *shunting in and out of ILEA's schools (out, at the moment, unless specifically ordered by a headteacher) and Beatrix Potter being bowdlerised to the fury of the nation's Letters Pages. There's also, more commercially, a Children's Book Week beginning this Saturday — in view of which, here follows a selection of recent titles for the under-sixes . . .*

I HAVE LONG suspected that what makes a best-selling picture-book author is the ability to entrance and delight adult purchasers while, at the same time, remaining passably tolerable to children.

This is not easy. Young children have no natural predisposition towards the tasteful, delicate, wry or artistic; rather the opposite. In our house the favourite book of the moment is *Potatoes on the Farm*, which is about just that. And books that are issued to wild critical acclaim often leave their young audiences cold.

This just might be the fate of Catherine Brighton's sumptuous and imaginative **Five Secrets in a Box** (Methuen, £5.95), the story of Virginia, daughter of Galileo, who probes the secrets of his work when she finds a glass lens and a feather in his study. The prose is spare, the illustrations a feast of colour and atmosphere, and the story opens the way for discussion of topics from gravity to falconry. But, despite all that, it appears to be a book that children have to learn to love, possibly because the full import of the Renaissance scientist's work is hard for them to appreciate.

Much the same is true of another strongly atmospheric book, **The Boy Who Held Back the Sea** (Cape, £6.50), a retelling by Lenny Hort of the traditional Dutch tale, powerfully interpreted by the American artist Thomas Locker. His illustrations evoke all the richness of the great Dutch masters, but seem almost overwhelming to children on first acquaintance.

What children really like, of course, is more of the same and, from a huge pile of new issues, my junior browsers seized on **Wilberforce Goes to Playgroup** (Viking Kestrel, £5.95), the latest story of Margaret Gordon's mischievous bear, who bounces through his dreary urban environment doing all the things that children do. A nice book, but exactly the same formula as before.

Farm Machinery (Dent, £5.95), another book for the camera of Jane Miller, is also the same as before, but looks freshly minted. Her photographs are stunning and she can not only shoot a pick-up baler so that its workings are clearly visible, but turn it into a work of art in the process.

The middle ground, where adults and children both cast their votes, invariably turns out to be occupied by veterans of their craft. Helen Oxenbury, dubbed 'queen of the board books' by her publishers, has produced four new large-size books — **Tickle, Tickle, Clap Hands, Say Goodnight** and **All Fall Down** (Walker Books, £1.95 each), whose bouncing babies come in various hues. A move in the right direction and a useful format for playgroups and nurseries.

Two more animal stories from William Mayne, **Leapfrog** and **Lamb Shenkin** (Walker Books, £5.95 each), provide the familiar stylised prose that always gives reading Mayne aloud the feeling of recounting an ancient myth.

Poet Adrian Mitchell has strengthened his growing reputation as a children's author with two further books. **Our Mammoth** (Walker Books, £5.95) is a jolly tale about a creature that the Gumble Twins find on the beach, while, for older children, Baron Munchausen embarks on another baroque adventure in **The Baron All At Sea** (Walker Books, £5.95), this time concerning the return of the Choir of One Thousand to their home in Africa. Both books are finely illustrated, the first by Priscilla Lamont, the second by Patrick Benson.

What neither adults nor children welcome are books of heavy-handed propaganda, laden — and leaden — with purpose. Guilty in this respect is **Ruth Has Two Homes** (Dent, £6.95), in which Ursula Kirchberg would have you believe that young children say to each other such things as, 'Luckily there's no arguing in our flat any more. My parents have split up, and my father has gone away. I'm glad he did in some ways. Perhaps your parents will live apart, too.'

But Jenny Hessell deserves praise for the way she handles the subject of sexual abuse in **What's Wrong With Bottoms?** (Hutchinson, £5.95), via a child's-eye tale of Uncle Henry who one day '. . . did something strange. We were in his room and he unzipped his trousers . . . I thought it was a silly thing for a man to do . . .' In the end Mum is alerted and questions of bare bottoms, broken promises and the fate of Uncle Henry are all sensitively and sensibly explored.

Alas, life is rarely as simple as stories and, shadowy, behind this book, are the haunting faces of the thousands of children whose suffering can have no such happy ending. But *What's Wrong With Bottoms?* will be welcomed by any adult searching for a way to breach this taboo territory with a child. □

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Knights and nights

Andrew Clements

. . . and a selection for those who can read to themselves

REPACKAGING OF CLASSIC stories has come a long way since *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare*. Scouring other cultures for likely collections seems to be one of the growth areas of the children's book industry, and retellings vary considerably in their effectiveness and fidelity to the originals.

Neil Philip's version of the Arthurian legends, **The Tale of Sir Gawain** (Lutterworth Press, £6.95), has drawn upon all the impeccable primary sources from Malory to the *Mabinogion*, yet carries its research lightly. The tales have been shaped into a continuous narrative, told by the ailing Gawain to his squire; the prose is straightforward and the dramatic curve of the story, right up to the banishment of Lancelot and the dispersal of the Round Table, is thoroughly satisfying. There's the bonus of illustrations by Charles Keeping: bold monochrome sketches that generate a real sense of primitive power.

Naomi's Lewis' **Stories from the Arabian Nights** (Methuen, £12.95) is more conventionally assembled; there are some self-conscious hints of archaism in the text — 'I am in this sunless cell not to die but to escape the doom of death' — but the selection of tales has been done with characteristic thoughtfulness and there is a nice mix of the familiar with the arcane. Jamila Gavin's powers as a creator of fantasy in her own right are already well established (her bewitching and vivid collection of short stories, *The Magic Orange Tree*, has just been reissued in paperback by Magnet at £1.75) but, in **Three Indian Princesses** (Methuen, £6.95), she presents three legends at the core of Hindu mythology: the stories of Savitri, Damayanti and Sita. A glossary provides a background to the tales and, at the same time, a useful introduction to Hindu culture and belief.

The lucid, straightforward style of Jamila Gavin should be managed comfortably by an eight- or nine-year-old with a decent quotient of reading stamina. The *Arabian Nights* spreads its appeal a little wider, and is clearly aimed at the early-teen market as well. But the governing

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parameters of books for the sixes to elevens seem bewilderingly imprecise: at the lower end of the range they merge with the picture-dominated stories of the pre-school and beginning readers; at the top they nudge into the well-defined and served category of teenage fiction.

Harriet Graham's well worked Victorian adventure **The Chinese Puzzle** (Deutsch, £6.50), set in the London underworld of the 1890s and copiously larded with period detail, clearly belongs at the very top of the age range; so does Paula Fox's elegantly written **The Lost Boy** (Dent, £8.50), which is both a convincing evocation of place (the Greek island of Thasos) and a subtle teasing-out of relationships that are half-child, half-adult. **Rob's Place** by John Rowe Townsend (Viking Kestrel, £6.95) might be accessible to slightly younger children, but its theme of alienated youth caught between the halves of a broken marriage will strike older chords too. Jean Ure's **Tea-Leaf on the Roof** (Blackie, £6.95) is prefaced by a dictionary of Cockney rhyming slang, setting the tone for what is a lively and irreverent little mystery, a Famous Five adventure for the 1980s.

Some books are much harder to place. **Meet Mr Majimpsey** (Pavilion/Michael Joseph, £8.95) by John Hosken almost falls over its own cleverness and runs the risk of missing its audience altogether. The plot, with its mix of fictional favorites (Toad of Toad Hall makes an early appearance) and a whole new race of fantasy creatures in the persons of the Spriggans, seems to contain enough material for half a dozen stories. Older children might baulk at its gallery of nursery characters but younger ones may well not grasp the ramifications of the whole affair. In **A House Inside Out** (Deutsch, £5.95) Penelope Lively gets tone and content exactly balanced, spicing a chronicle of life below the floor-boards, and its cast of woodlice, spiders and three families of mice, with gentle and ironic hmour. It could perhaps be read aloud to fives and sixes while the reader enjoys the jokes.

Non-fiction seems thin on the ground in the current batch. **The Story of Wool** by Geoffrey Patterson (Deutsch, £5.95) appears to be targeted at school libraries and will surely be called on to flesh out many a classroom project. It presents a potted history of the wool industry from prehistory to the present, from sheep to sweater; the information is clear enough, but the illustrations are sometimes crude and schematic.

Once upon a time a child would look no farther than the red-clothed volumes of Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopaedia* for the story of wool or anything else. Now reference works come in all shapes: Moonlight Publishing's **Pocket Worlds** series (£2.95 each) aims to build a comprehensive libary of 'books of discovery for six years old and upwards'. There will be over a hundred altogether; the sample handful I've seen is surprisingly variable in quality. All share an illustrative style that is detailed and colourful, but some (*Wild Life in Towns* is a good example) range too widely in their subject matter to offer more than half truths. When the topic is tightly controlled, the result is far more interesting: *Chocolate, Tea and Coffee* and *Firemen to the Rescue* both have the space to include details; they also happen to avoid the distinct air of writing down that characterises some of the texts. □

ART

Who made thee?

John Spurling

'AND WHAT were they going to do with the Grail when they found it, Mr Rossetti?' Dante Gabriel Rossetti, large, slack and overweight, dressed in loose, painterly clothes, is standing with one foot on a ladder staring up at his droopy, half-finished mural of Lancelot and Guinevere in the Oxford Union.The stumpy figure of Professor Jowett, asking the question, has a puffy, self-satisfied face, with small eyes closed and lower lip jutting and is dressed in dark formal clothes with a clerical hat. Max Beerbohm's 23 classic watercolours of **Rossetti and His Circle** were first published in 1922 and are now republished in a handsome new edition taken directly from the originals (Yale, £12.95).

In his note to the first edition, Beerbohm points out that he never set eyes on Rossetti or most of his circle and claims that the Pre-Raphaelite decades were very romantic to him 'partly because I wasn't alive in them, and partly because Rossetti was'. '*On se moque de ce qu'on aime*,' he adds. Perhaps, but not I suspect without a strong element of frustration and unhappiness in oneself. It's not easy to take the mickey as gently and devastatingly as Beerbohm did, but it's only too easy to be aware of the aburdity and unreality of art when compared to the dogged practicalities of the world and, especially, the physical and psychological deficiencies of the artists themselves.

The art of the Pre-Raphaelites may have been unusually absurd because of its second-rate earnestness; but can we take Rubens' baroque fantasies of fat nude women and buxom cherubs seriously if we also think of the painter as a highly successful Antwerp businessman and property-owner and even at one point in his career — during the tricky peace negotiations between the Big Powers of Europe just before the Thirty Years' War — a much-admired diplomat, shuttling energetically like an early Henry Kissinger between Flanders, Paris, Madrid and London? If we can, it's surely only because he lived so long ago that the history he took part in now seems almost as unreal as the Christian and classical mythologies he painted. Christopher White's splendidly straightforward and unusually readable monograph **Peter Paul Rubens** (Yale, £40) does not raise this question explicitly, but it gives such a sympathetic sense of the man in his time — at any rate the outward man, both private and public, since no one has ever been able to discover anything to Rubens' discredit except some small vanity over the titles he acquired — that the operatic artificiality of the illustrations seems particularly marked.

And opera is of course the clue. Making and enjoying art is the art of being able to step off the street and plunge straight into the world of Samson and Delilah, Paris and the three naked goddesses, Mary being carried up to heaven or Christ being brought down from his cross. The shutting off of one world from the other, though, is essential. You can talk to Max Beerbohm in the interval, but you can't have him sitting next to you during the performance, tittering and drawing exaggerated tits and bums on his programme.

Andrew Wyeth's 'opera' is deceptive. It's done with such restraint, such emphasis on the plain appearance of things, people and places, that it almost succeeds in convincing you that there is no division, that the world and his painted world are identical. **The Helga Pictures** — some 250 paintings and drawings of Wyeth's neighbour Helga Testorf — were made over a period of 15 years in almost complete secrecy, even from his wife, brought as a complete group by an American collector and are now touring America. The book (Viking, £25), apart from a long introduction by John Wilmerding of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and a few lapidary comments by the artist ('I think one's art goes as far and as deep as one's love goes'), consists entirely of fine reproductions of the pictures, printed in Japan. There has been much speculation about the exact relationship between these New England neighbours, but it's beside the point. Whether or not Wyeth and Mrs Testorf were lovers in the real world, they certainly are in this 15-year saga of costume and nakedness, winter and summer, sleep and wakefulness, in which Helga is seen to grow a little older but the artist's cool, precise approach never changes. As in all Wyeth's work, the sense of touch is very strong, but there is absolutely no sense of sound nor any comeback from the model. It is a mute love-affair, conducted between one wholly active but invisible and one always visible but wholly passive partner. A beautiful thing, no doubt, but even less of this world than Rubens' cherubs and goddesses. □

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Toying with Tory tactics

Jenny Morris, London N19

Under current financial pressure, when the wolf really is at the door, Margaret Hodge is calling for 'radical thinking about how to manage council services' (*NS* 18 September). Her suggestion is that all spending must be questioned to the extent of starting with a 'blank piece of paper'.

As a consumer of local authority services I am becoming increasingly worried about the so-called pragmatism expressed in her interview and echoed by many other local Labour politicians at this time. An alternative title to her interview would more appropriately have been 'Making a virtue out of necessity'. The only reason why Labour local politicians are reconsidering services previously taken for granted is because the Tories are forcing them to.

On the other hand, as a council tenant I am aware of how much Islington Council has improved its services over the last few years, particularly with the impact of decentralisation. A questioning has been going on since the late 1970s within the Labour Party about the relationship between the local state and the consumer. Decentralisation was one result, along with greater consultation and participation and an emphasis on the interests of groups of people who have previously lost out. Why, therefore, don't Margaret Hodge and others like her continue on this trajectory of 'radical rethinking' rather than take the framework which the Tories are handing them — which can only lead to a dismantling of the services we need?

The dangers are particularly apparent in housing policy. Labour housing chairs are now changing their policies on who is accepted as homeless, in particular tightening up on the definition of 'intentionally homeless'. Instead of making it very clear who is to blame for the housing crisis, an ideological shift is taking place which seeks to blame homeless people for their lack of housing. In other policy areas, Labour is suddenly 'discovering' that charging for a service supposedly means that the consumer has more control.

All this is dangerously close to Thatcher's thinking. Why can't we stick with our radical tradition instead of trying to outdo the Tories at their own game? When cuts have to be made and rents and charges put up we should be very clear and public about why this is. Why pretend there is any virtue in carrying out the policies which central government is forcing on local government?

John Daly, General Secretary, NALGO

In two lengthy *NS* features (18 September) local government trades union were well and truly 'bashed' in a style worthy of tabloid newspaper journalism.

John Lloyd said without substantiation: 'Even now, in the media and especially in local government, unions stop good things happening and encourage bad states of affairs to continue.'

And Christian Wolmar or was it Margaret Hodge — attribution was unclear — displayed a bad case of Islingtonitis. They should both cast their nets wider than two London boroughs if trying to make a general case about local government unions or, indeed, NALGO.

But even if we look at these boroughs in isolation the facts are these: in Islington the council has not even approached the trade unions yet with its priorities for budget cuts. And in Camden, where leader Tony Dykes bemoans the fact that 2,000 jobs have been created without a quantifiable improvement in services, should it not be the people who have created those jobs who are also responsible for performance?

The dichotomy between jobs and services discussed in the feature is false. People provide services and if you get rid of people, then services go also. NALGO as a union has clear national policy for local government. But within that service, with over 500 authorities and 500,000 members, circumstances differ as befits any service with elected political leadership and control. It is wrong to say that NALGO has had a running battle with the left-wing councils; there are numerous left-wing councils where elected members and trade unions work together well. And even in the examples quoted, disputes may have arisen over one issue while there is a constructive working relationship on all others.

Exhaustion on the NHS

Peter W. Barry, Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham

You should be ashamed of publishing Peter Capella's disingenuous article on private medicine (*NS* 18 September). By blaming private work for junior doctors' dangerous hours of work, he has linked together two barely related scandals to create a 'Shock, Horror' exposé that marginalises the issue of doctors working a 90+ hour week, in order to highlight the problems of having private medicine in NHS locations, by NHS personnel.

'Junior Doctors', that is Senior Registrars and below, from qualification until age 35 (on average), are regularly expected to work 50 hours continuously on call; you sleep and eat whenever you can, if you can. If I were an airline pilot it would be illegal for me to work these hours, and yet at weekends I am responsible for more children than you could pack into a small airliner. If I were a lorry driver, I would have my HGV taken away if I worked this length of time without a break, and yet I regularly handle chemicals more toxic than those carried on the roads.

Part of the blame for this must rest with the complacency of doctors and their union. The problem needs to be addressed by all those concerned with the provision of health care, but it's got bugger all to do with private medicine.

Confusing choice with prejudice

Ray Honeyford, Prestwich, Manchester

John Rentoul accuses me of 'English ethnicism' (*NS* 11 September). I'm not sure what that is, apart from being bad English. He also suggests I should be 'deported to the 19th-century'. Is this what passes for wit at the *NS* these days? (Was 'deported' a Freudian slip, or a particularly nasty subliminal suggestion that I favour deportation of ethnic minorities?)

Mr Rentoul insists that the Dewsbury affair is to do with 'racial prejudice'. His allegation does not rest on evidence — has he actually met the parents, or considered why Dewsbury is so enormously attractive to Asians? — but on an insistence that there is no distinction between the concepts of race and culture. He would, therefore, insist that the *culture* of black Brazilians is identical with that of the *racially* similar black people of Jamaica; and that of

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Chinese Indonesians the same as that of their counterparts on the Chinese mainland. And by so doing, he would display a woeful ignorance — an ignorance that would undoubtedly cause considerable offence to the people concerned.

When is the left in this country going to grasp that its involvement in, and continued support for, anti-racist ideology is not only a distraction from its real purposes, but is actually damaging the class it is committed to supporting, and is almost certainly helping to worsen race relations?

A curriculum for equality

Anne Corbett, Paris

What a pity Chris Price (*NS* 11 September) does not separate the question of a national curriculum from the use which Kenneth Baker is making of it. To the extent that the Baker formula is yet another factor to strengthen the perverse British attachment to a private education system few criticisms can come amiss.

If, however, the aim is to make the profession of education a birth right rather than a market product — and how amazing that in an established democracy one needs to make the point — nationally defined curricular outlines are a particularly effective instrument. They can be made a guarantee of equality of access to the same culture, the same knowledge and the same civic values.

Instead of picking on those hoary old chestnuts about the centrally controlled curricula of Eastern Europe and Iran (and what about Nazi Germany while we are at it) people of Chris Price's experience should look nearer home.

For 200 years the French (whom I see also figure on his list of baddies) have demonstrably seen the content of education and the health of a democracy as inextricably entwined. In my experience the way in which programme guidelines are framed is positively aimed to produce school leavers capable of rational thought and independent argument.

Let me also suggest that the left usefully draws the right's fire by adopting French insistence that public funds should not be available to private schools unless they teach to nationally defined programmes. It would be very revealing about what is meant by equality of opportunity.

Edgell Rickword 1898-1982

Charles Hoday, 28 Ingelow House, Holland St, London W8 7NX

I am preparing the authorised biography of the poet, critic and translator Edgell Rickword (1898-1982) for Carcanet Press. I would be grateful for any correspondence, photographs or documentation (which I will copy and return promptly), reminiscences or other material relating to this author.

Left alive and united

Paul Thompson, Chair, Labour Co-ordinating Committee

I am sorry to have to inform John Lloyd that the 'dismembered body' of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (Diary 11 September) is alive and well. The disagreement inside LCC on how to advance the left is one among friends and comrades.

John Lloyd's comment has to be seen in the context of his persistent attempts to arrange a marriage between the 'soft left' and the right of the party. It is not on. While the sectarian oppositionalism of the 'hard left' has been a destructive force, we are equally critical of the failed politics of the coalition of forces that led us to defeat in the last election.

In one of his few attempts to prove a common politics, John Lloyd defined the 'new revisionism' as 'a bit of mild Corporatism, a bit more welfare and education spending . . . and the creation of a more liberal and open-minded political culture' (Editorial 3 July).

This may define the 'let's manage capitalism better' politics of John Lloyd and the right, but it is far from the LCC agenda of a radical, decentralised and pluralist socialism. The democratic left in the party is growing, despite all the efforts of our 'friends' to the left and right to split us.

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ERNEST WISHART, who died on 16 September, was co-founder of Wishart & Company, a radical publishing house which played an important part in the intellectual life of the Left in the '20s and '30s. In 1936 the firm merged with Martin Lawrence to form Lawrence & Wishart. The present day board of Lawrence & Wishart owe a great debt to Ernest Wishart for the role he played in establishing the company, and for his support and work for many years. He is remembered with respect and affection. W40.3

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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-638 8891. **BARBICAN THEATRE:** 8-15 Oct. **THE WINTER'S TALE.** 16-17 Oct. **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. THE PIT:** 5-11 Closed. 12-15 **DEATHWATCH and THE MAIDS (NB** Perf begins at **7 p.m.** on Mon 12) by **Jean Genet.** 16-17 Oct **THE ART OF SUCCESS** by **Nick Dear. MERMAID THEATRE:** 7-15 Oct **SARCOPHAGUS** by **Vladimir Gurbaryev.** 16-17 Oct. **THE GREAT WHITE HOPE by Howard Sackler.**

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Corse precedents

Andrew Lumsden

EVEN SIR ALFRED SHERMAN has not, I think, yet pointed out the extent to which our glorious Prime Minister may be compared to Napoleon at the height of his triumphs (c.1810-14) when, as he held court, 'his father-in-law the Emperor of Austria, and the six kings of Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Württemberg, Westphalia, and Naples were in attendance like so many lackeys'.

I got a biography of Madame de Staël out of the local library (J. Christopher Herold, Hamish Hamilton, 1959) and was greatly struck by her efforts to publish *De l'Allemagne*: a work from which apparently one or two inferences might be drawn that were not in every way in conformity with the Emperor's views on absolutely everything in sight. Napoleon personally, in the intervals of scheming to invade Russia, ordered its suppression.

De l'Allemagne was made prohibited reading for the French. The plates, the initial print-run, were destroyed by the police. The publisher was made bankrupt. Madame de Staël was not only told to stay out of France but to quit Europe for America (she managed to evade that). France's agents everywhere were instructed to use every means to prevent the book's publication by any nation. In the end (1813) it was published by John Murray, in London, with prefaces outlining all the emperor's censorship efforts.

Just what the book was about, other than German Romanticism, I didn't quite grasp — any more than, I suppose, 175 years from now, people will quite understand what Peter Wright was on about. If anything, I feel that Napoleon comes out of this comparison rather better than Mrs Thatcher. He was giving huge publicity to a book partly criticising French cultural insularity; she to a book by a man seemingly quite unaware of his own petty insularity.

The most demoralising circumstance, of course, is that Britain then could occupy a place in 'world letters', could be a refuge from systems of tyranny, a publishing haven. 'Every freeman (*sic*) has an undoubted right to lay what sentiments he pleases before the people, to forbid this is to destroy the freedom of the press,' wrote the thoroughly conservative English lawyer William Blackstone, not even in the 19th century but in the 18th. The American Constitution's sentiments precisely.

'Why,' an entirely kind and well-disposed friend said to me the other day, 'do you so often seem to be so angry in those columns you do in the *New Statesman*? Several people,' my friend continued, 'have commented on it.' I flared up: 'Look at the 18th-century press, look at the 19th-century press, it's full of furies and denunciations.' Even *The Times*, locally-owned then, was known to the world of Victorian values as 'The Thunderer' for its government-bashing leaders . . .

'A lot of us out here,' I said, 'are expletive *furious*. Have we come to such a pass that anger has taken the place that sexuality once had — inexpressible in the 'quality' print media, as it most certainly is on TV and radio? Everything anodyne and everything turned into a genteel entertainment where balanced sentiment greets balanced sentiment in a *pavane* from one end of the 'serious' press to the other, and every columnist is a mere entrant for equivalents of *Guardian Bedside Reading*?'

'Whoa, whoa!' my poor friend recoiled. I expect he's right. I can't tell you how many dear friends (I mean no irony) have advised me in recent months, since I became unemployed for the umpteenth time in my 25 years as an eccentric national newspaper/periodical journalist, to cool off — and, above all, to write about other things than a topic I won't name today.

I expect they too are right. It's a wide world with a million topics for anyone to plunge into, me too. But with Germaine de Staël, had she ever lived to hear an English Law Lord, and Peter Wright, had he ever had a thought, I ponder Lord Oliver on 13 August opposing censorship of *Spycatcher*: 'Ideas however unpopular or unpalatable, once released and however released into the open air of free discussion and circulation, cannot forever be effectively proscribed'. Can't they just? Name me a mainstream journalist who . . . tries to write as I have done for the past quarter century. □

"Let me through. I'm a chef."

FIRST PERSON

Doing time

Jeremy Harding

EARLIER THIS YEAR I saw my first, and probably last, police museum. It was at the Citadel, an ancient fortified promontory in the Muqattam Hills overlooking Cairo. From here, you get one of the best views across the town — an imbroglio of mosques and offices, trailing off into fields of suburban high rise. Crouching at the back of the scene are the pyramids of Giza, agitated by a brown haze of heat and pollution.

It's a 50 yard walk from the parapet back to the police museum. A large building with an elegant porch contains various law and order memorabilia. One part of it deals exclusively with assassinations. For example, the shooting of Lee Stack Pasha by Egyptian nationalists in 1924 — a superb piece of ingenuity on the part of the conspirators, and a very messy business altogether. One of the assassins, in the halting but dignified prose of the blurb, 'pretended to be eating a sandwich in which he hide a gun'. When the British military commander appeared, the killer raised the sandwich and let him have it. Reprisals, as in most of these accounts, followed swiftly.

Outside the main building are two rows of prison cells, used until recently for real. Nowadays they contain waxwork prisoners in period dress: incarceration down the ages is the engaging theme here. From one era to another, however, it turns out to be much the same. Only the colourful costumes change. Thus a prisoner from the Mameluke period differs from his Ottoman counterpart insofar as the second resembles a character from Tintin but the first does not. The 'prisoner from the recent period' is in the same grim predicament as both, only he is reading to pass the time and looks like a dusky version of the young Régis Debray, bespectacled and pensive.

I went to the Citadel with Ahmed Said Hassan, a journalist working for an opposition newspaper in Cairo, and his ten-year-old daughter, Basma. He

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seemed as surprised by the museum as I was; he had brought his daughter and me to see the great mosques and palaces.

But Ahmed Said was familiar with the smell of the place. He had been detained in the Citadel in 1979. His party's journal had taken strenuous exception to the Camp David accords and Sadat had slung him in jail. 'We asked to be removed from this prison,' he said as we walked up the path between the two rows of doors, 'because it was under the control of the secret police. This we didn't like.' He and several other people had been arrested and held in separate cells. They were allowed two daily excursions to the toilet. Round the clock, he told me, guards had paced slowly up and down the flat roofs of the cell blocks with alsatian dogs. At night recordings of beatings were played over a p.a. system. The prisoners began a hunger strike. After a week they were transferred. 'Prisoner from the recent period,' said the jocular Ahmed Said, tapping his index finger against his chest.

It took Ahmed Said and his nimble daughter about 15 minutes to locate his cell. Running from door to door across a level band of shade cast by the nearer of the two blocks, she would gaze in at each of the waxworks and beckon to her father. He, in turn, would look through the doors, examining the walls and ceilings, and shake his head slowly from side to side. In fact, the cell was in a disused block cordoned off by a wall of corrugated iron. Ahmed Said stood on tiptoe with his back towards me and peered over the gate at this miserable place. After a minute or so he snorted. 'There,' he said, and pointed at one of the cell doors. He lifted his daughter up for a better view. She stared intensely for a few moments, frowned and turned her head to scrutinise her father. Ahmed Said let her down and she ran back in the direction of the exhibit for a last look at her favourite detainee: the cheerful waxwork prisoner from the Ottoman period. □

FOOD

To the slaughter

Colin Spencer

ON THE WEEKEND beginning 2 October, the Great British 'Meat Out' is being celebrated.

The Vegetarian Society, the Vegan Society, Animal Aid, Compassion in World Farming and Enough have combined to mark the occasion with a beano* at Imperial College, Kensington, where a prize draw, a celebrity auction, a vegan buffet, disco and entertainment will raise money for the Sarvodya project. This is a self-help education group based in Sri Lanka which is making protein out of pulped leaves as a way to help feed the starving world.

The many moral arguments for giving up meat often reduce the complexities of omnivore people

Salamanca 125

'Always'

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus in One Volume for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 125, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 2 November.**

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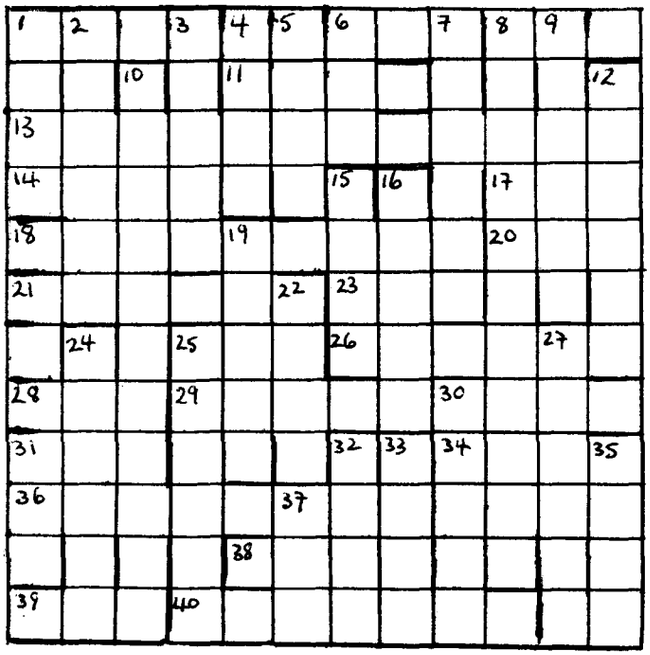

Ten unclued answers are of a type (6 & 15 should be taken together and familiar to devotees of radio and TV comedy) and their unchecked letters tell us they are SADLY TROD. 25 Down, also unclued, should be completed to conform to a proverb in the same general category, which when expressed correctly can be applied to provide the answer.

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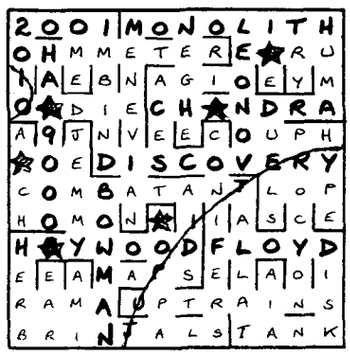
ACROSS

11 Shaken in fierce extremes ? (4)
13 On Sunday locals gossip thuswise? (12)
14 Leads to army pressing switch ? (4)
17 Do you find *this* on head ? (3)
18 On steep road, sign of police — nothing escaping ? (9)
23 One's being born in America (3)
25 Scots hat, not totally gross (3)
26 Aborigines, peculiarly small, say: *not* when _____ ? (6)
29 Instrument Hunter holds — harp perhaps? (9)
31 After sex change they're no longer what they were (3)
34 Linger no longer in shelter that's not long (4)
36 Like some wood, a hard, rugged, iron sort ? (12)
38 Scots light one in their outer room ? (4)
40 Direction that Senor required for guidance (9)

DOWN

1 Old Father Time clutching handle of scythe (4)
3 Present perhaps (or not !) (5)
4 Part foreign or kept at home (4)
5 It could have meant stop (there's case for making it thus) (4)
7 Winners may or may not blow them ? (6)
8 Head to summon naughty sion with these ? (11)
9 Real in composition, but lacking reality (3 words, 6)
10 Within a metre pause may be required to unroll this ? (11)
12 I shew *this* transparent black stuff with wispy ruches, kinky ? (6)
16 More than one old Indian with new heart (2 words, 5)
21 Just one small spade held and I *may* make this ? (6)
22 Devil from past rhyme, say (no trash) (4)
24 Sugar, a past flame wearing stockings ? (6)
25 *See preamble*
30 I found hern about here in Somerset ? (5)
32 Done for no payment — (one's actually lost) — Scots wept ! (4)
33 Manure-fed grass: it's vital to start a thicket (4)
35 Alter headings of those daily items, etc. ? (4)

Solution to Salamanca 124



Theme: (Arthur C) Clarke's novels *2001 & 2010*. (39: 'Rendezvous with Rama')

Prizewinners to Salamanca 124

Mrs J. C. B-W. Leonard
(Sutton Courtenay, Oxon.)
J. C. Hutchison (Rothesay)
Jim Anderton (Redhill, Surrey)

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immersed in the world of capitalist trading to a series of simplistic banalities which can too easily be shot down and exposed as quixotic and illogical. But it has always seemed to me the most persuasive argument is that of placing what we eat in the context of the world's food supply. It is a crazy and cruel world which feeds 40 per cent of grains (50 per cent in the UK) to cattle which are then slaughtered for a small affluent minority, when these grains could be used as important protein foods for the 500 million malnourished people in the world.

Do we need to eat meat at all? No, is the short answer; we can achieve a better meal nutritionally without meat. It's not that a free-range, lean piece of meat is unhealthy *per se*, but its inclusion in the diet tends to dislodge other foods which, in certain combinations, could be better for making up the high dietary fibre, low fat, low sugar, low salt meals that we know are beneficial. A balanced diet with the correct proportion of amino acids can easily be made from fish, eggs, nuts, grains, pulses, fresh fruit and vegetables; even if you leave the first two out, as in the vegan diet, you will still be eating marvellously well and avoiding many of the diseases that today afflict Westerners. Studies comparing the vegetarian Seventh Day Adventists with their meat-eating neighbours show that the former live ten years longer (though they might claim that this was solely due to belief in Jesus).

It is, however, becoming suspected that a diet of meat twice a day can be a contributory cause to many of our most common ailments. Too much fat in the blood stream lines the arterial walls so that the blood cannot flow easily, causing heart attacks and strokes. Additive residues can accumulate in joints, resulting in rheumatism and gout.

There is also the growing threat of food poisoning. Salmonella bacteria are in eight out of ten chickens on the supermarket shelf — and there's a new, virulent form called 'superbug', because it has developed resistance to an increasing number of medically important antibiotics used in farming.

The salmonella bacteria can be passed on through the livestock in their feed and, as this is now often made up from chicken litter (the droppings, feathers, bedding and unwanted food) mixed with carbohydrates, it is not surprising that cattle consume bacteria as well as the chemical additives that have passed through the chicken's body.

A close examination of today's farming, geared for quick profit, exposes practices of such unfeeling exploitation of animals that it should make vegans of us all. But, even if we are unmoved by the plight of the factory farmed animal, the most enthusiastic carnivore has to agree that the meat product has declined in quality over the last decade.

Meat Out hopes to convert this carnivore to agree to at least one day without flesh. It urges us to see the eating of meat in the global context, as part of the food chain which has been one of the facts in causing a decline in the quality of our planet. And, in all of this environmental pollution, I believe that factory farming is the most pernicious evil: moving animals from the land to inside housing units was a radical change, from natural to artificial, with all the attendant hazards that the latter entails.

The most basic hazard is that animals' dung no longer benefits the soil, so that 1) farmers are committed to chemicals for fertilisers and 2) the slurry from the cattle, now impregnated with chemicals, has to go somewhere else. Water being the natural medium for washing away our ills, all the agricultural pollution goes into streams, rivers, estuaries and, finally, the sea. Spills of slurry from farms into our water supply have more than doubled between 1979 and 1986.

All the vegetarian organisations will never stop people from being omnivorous, though I am convinced that the vegetarian trend is humane and will continue to grow. But, if these humane and meatless organisations can begin to change the face of farming so that it returns to compassionate husbandry, they will, as well as releasing animals from stress and misery, benefit the rural environment to an unimaginable extent. □

**The Meat Out Beano at Imperial College, South Kensington, London, is on Saturday 3 October, 8 to midnight. Tickets, £7.50, include donation to Sarvodya project.*

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No 2992 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Extracts from magazine interviews in which Mrs Tamburlaine, Mrs Ghengis Khan, etc., give examples of their husbands' sense of humour.

Report **By Gray Dorn**

Back *again*! But this time permanently, I think. As soon as I heard of John Lloyd's imminent departure, I realised there was nothing else for it but to abandon my Balkan sanctuary and return to take the helm. Because of some constitutional quirk — dating from the time of the Webbs, I believe — the *New Statesman* Board unfortunately has to go through the formality of advertising the post, and may even have to waste time interviewing David Owen, Les Huckfield and various refugees from the *News on Sunday*. Still, they're paying me a generous retainer while I'm waiting. In my own vision of the magazine's future, only one small area of doubt remains (apart from the title — I can't decide between *Red Weekly* and *The Spark*): do we dump the comp? It's not an easy decision, for I have to take into account the critical therapeutic and financial role it plays in the lives of the dozen of you who enter, as well as the interests of our wider readership. But I must admit that, after reading this week's sub-*Monty Python* batch, I'm less inclined to charity. How about one last chance? Take a look at these — the *best* received (£10 each). Then try to do, say, ten times better with the ingenious comp I've set above. Then we'll see. It's up to you.

Ivan didn't smile much, so people often didn't realise he had a rich sense of humour. I remember once when we were sacking Novgorod, he ordered all the boyars to be rounded up, and as they were brought before him each one was put to the sword. Ivan sat and watched without any expression at all on his face, as though he were struggling with some abstruse philosophical problem. Then he suddenly gave a kind of satisfied sigh and, gesturing towards the scenes of slaughter, he turned to me and said, "Jabs for the boyars!" We had a lot of laughs in those days.

Much later, when he was dying, a group of us were gathered at his bedside. "How do you feel now, Ivan?" I asked. "Terrible!" he replied. We all fell about at that. Then he died. I'm sure it was a joke.

NOEL PETTY

'He was in tremendous form that night. Brutus asked him his opinion of the Gallic leaders. "I like their Gaul!" Julius replied and had us all in a roar. He described how he'd punished a belligerent tribe by severing the arms of the adult men above the elbow. "That stumped them," Brutus ventured, rather obviously, I thought; quick as a flash Julius replied "They'll be 'armless enough now," and again we all laughed. However, Brutus has a dull sense of humour and when J. started ragging him, addressing him in the vocative as *Brute* (using the Britannic pronunciation) although it was most amusing, poor Brutus became irritated and left early — rather fuddled with drink. Julius put him on the southward road instead of the northward. "Well," he drolly remarked afterwards, "all roads lead to Rome, Calpurnia." I could hardly help him upstairs, so overcome we both were with laughter.'

GERARD BENSON

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Take me to your Leader
by Meanin' Minnie
HAVE YOU NOTICED? THIS PLANET IS RIDDLED WITH RIDLOIDS
RIDLOIDS?
PARASITIC ORGANISMS FROM THE PLANET POLLTAX— THEY DISGUISE THEMSELVES AND INFILTRATE ENVIRONMENTS
THERE'S ONE NOW—
JUST ONE RIDLOID CAN IRRETRIEVABLY DAMAGE AN ENVIRONMENT IN A MATTER OF MONTHS, EVEN WEEKS··· SOME OF THEM LOOK ALMOST HUMAN—
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
—BUT OF COURSE THEIR SINISTER AND INHUMAN INCLINATIONS GIVE THEM AWAY
2·10
fzzzzp!!
COMMUNITY CHARGE
tingle
twitch
tingle
© JOHN KENT

Chess

THE TOP placings in this year's **Lloyds Bank Masters** (22-31 August) ensured that at least some American visitors enjoyed themselves in London: 1-2. Wilder (USA) and Chandler (England) 8/10, 3-6. Benjamin (USA), Ernst (Sweden), Fedorowicz (USA) and Rogers (Australia) 7½/10. The first prize of £1200 went to 25-year-old IM Michael Wilder on tie-break. He also got something else, something of inestimable value to any ambitious IM — a grandmaster norm.

What makes the LBM a special event, however, is not so much what happens at the top of the table, but rather a deliberate policy of packing the tournament with young players. This sort of sponsorship can hardly fail to produce 'sensational' results (some Jack is going to kill a giant every year), but there are also more lasting benefits. Viswanathan Anand (India) and Michael Adams (winner and runner-up for the 1987 LBM junior trophy, both scoring 7/10) seem well set to become two of the world's leading players in the 1990s, having received an important part of their practical chess education in this event. And who will follow them? Perhaps 13-year-old Cathy Haslinger, whose play in the tournament made her the youngest British girl to appear in the FIDE rating lists. Or maybe 11-year-old Demis Hassapis, the youngest player, who beat an Indian expert with a 2350 rating. In the end Demis just fell short of the score that would have made him the youngest boy ever to hold a 2200+ FIDE rating. 'I'll be back next year,' he said.

Two miniatures from the 1987 Lloyds Bank Masters show that, in spite of a reputation for being safe and reliable to the point of stodginess, the **Caro-Kann** is a defence that Black can come to grief in as quickly as any other.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nf6 5. Nxf6+ with two ways to recapture:

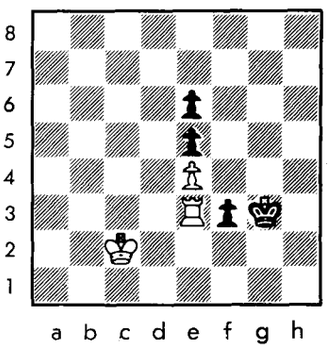
Nunn-Arkell: 5 . . . exf6 6. c3 Bf5 7. Ne2 Bd6 8. Ng3 Bg6 9. Bc4 0-0 10. 0-0 Re8 11. f4 b5 12. Bb3 Be4 13. Qh5 Qd7 14. Nxe4 Rxe4 15. Bc2 g6 16. Qh4 Re8 17. f5 Be7 18. Rf3 g5 19. Qh5 Bd8 20. Bxg5 1-0. If 20 . . . fxg5 21. f6 wins quickly.

Kudrin-Sowray: 5 . . . gxf6 6. c3 Bf5 7. Nf3 Qc7 8. g3 Nd7 9. Bg2 e6 10. 0-0 Bd6 11. Re1 0-0-0 12. b4 h5 13. Nh4 Bg4 14. Qa4 Kb8 15. c4 e5 16. c5 Bf8 17. b5 cxb5 18. Qxb5 a6 19. Qb2 exd4? 20. Bf4 Ne5 21. Rxe5! 1-0.

Of course, 4 . . . Nf6 is the frisky line of the Caro-Kann. If you want to avoid the risks associated with the doubled f-pawns, you choose the solid 4 . . . Bf5 or the super-solid 4 . . . Nd7. Well, I don't have anything much to say against 4 . . . Bf5, but after a long period of accomplishing very little against 4 . . . Nd7 White has come up with a troublesome sacrificial idea.

Geller-Meduna, Sochi 1986
4 . . . Nd7 5. Bd3 5. Bc4 has been almost an automatic choice. **Ngf6 6. Ng5 e6** 6 . . . h6 7. Ne6 is one of the possibilities White has in mind. **7. N1f3 h6 8. Nxe6!? Qe7** Black's development would be even more seriously gummed up after 8 . . . fxe6 9. Bg6+ Ke7 10. 0-0. **9. 0-0 fxe6 10. Bg6+ Kd8 11. Bf4** White has sacrificed a whole piece for positional considerations — Black's development is in a mess. Meduna plays for . . . Bd6, but it involves wasting too much time with the Q. He might also consider 11 . . . b6 followed by . . . Bb7 and . . . Kc8. **Qb4 12. a3 Qxb2 13. Qe2 Nd5 14. Bd2 Bd6?** Black is lost after this. Geller suggests that best play is 14 . . . Qb6 15. c4 Ne7 16. Bf7 — surely still a position White will love to play. **15. Qxe6 Kc7 16. Rfb1 Qxa1 17. Rxa1 Ne5 18. Qxd6+ Kxd6 19. Nxe5** Black has managed to trade Queens and is still the exchange for a pawn up. But White's pieces are all active and the threat of Nf7+ means that the one well-placed Black unit (Nd5) will be driven off. **Kc7 20. c4 Ne7 21. Bf4 Rf8 22. Nf7+ Kd7 23. Bh5 b5** Black's pieces, still hardly out of the box, are just dead wood. So the rest of the game is not fair sides. **24. c5 Nf5 25. Ne5+ Ke6 26. Nxc6 Bb7 27. Re1+ Kf6 28. d5 g6 29. Re6+ Kg7 30. Be5+ Kg8 31. Rxg6+ Kh7 32. g4 Bxc6 33. gxf5 Rxf5 34. Rg7+ Kh8 35. Rg5+ Rxe5 36. Rxe5 1-0.**

Problem
White to play and draw (Peckover, 1957). Just giving up the Rook for Black's passed pawn leads to a lost King and Pawn ending, but how else can White meet . . . Kg2 and . . . f3-f2-f1?



George Botterill

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This England

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☐ After hearing a report on a big increase in paper work, Berkshire county councillors commissioned a further report on ways to cut down. – *The Times* (Leonard Cox)

☐ A two-day seminar for businesswomen has been cancelled by Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry because too many wanting to attend said bosses could not cope without them. – *The Times* (Janey Buchan MEP)

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☐ Along with 'a nice bum' and a hairy chest one of the virtues most likely to commend the wooing male to his intended is the ability to make good Horlicks, according to a national survey of engaged couples for *Wedding and Home* magazine. – *Scotsman* (Margaret MacDonald)

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Although it forms part of the 'Balkan' peninsula, the attraction of Albania has been its very remoteness and isolation from the rest of the area. This is partly occasioned by its geophysical situation — protected by a mountainous swathe, and indeed in more recent years by its social situation. There is much that is familiar in Albania — the Mediterranean coastline and the fine climate associated with it, olive groves, vineyards. The language is tantalising — sounds and words that seem familiar — and which indeed reflect Albania's past influences — Greek, Latin, Turkic, Slav, but retaining its own unique notes, which date back to its distant Illyrian origins. These influences are also detectable in the features of the people themselves, a people who are surprisingly warm and friendly, and who go about their work with a reassuring calm. While the coastal areas are attractively familiar, the mountains of Albania secrete Ottoman Fortresses, prehistoric dwellings, ancient citadels, the sites of battles both ancient and more recent.

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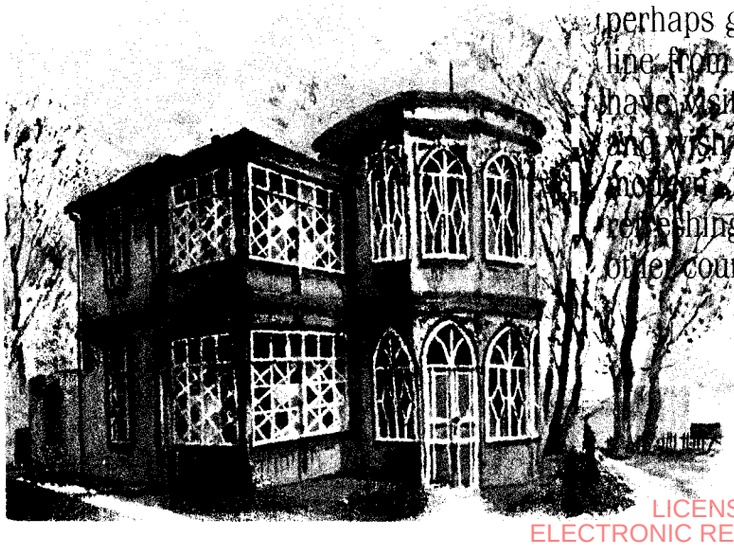

Day 1 LONDON — SHKODRA
We leave London Heathrow at midday, flying via Belgrade to Titograd, where we arrive in the evening and continue to the Albanian border post at Han i Hotit, where we cross to spend the night at Shkodra.

Day 2 SHKODRA — LEZHE — KRUJA
We proceed by road to Lezhe with its ancient history, before arriving at the hilltop city of Kruja, where we spend the night.

Day 3 KRUJA — TIRANA
We leave Kruja for the capital Tirana, arriving in time for lunch. In the afternoon visits will be arranged to the main points of interest. The night is spent in Tirana.

Day 4 TIRANA — DURRES — SHKODRA
We leave Tirana after breakfast, travelling to Durres on the coast where we stop for lunch and to visit the amphitheatre before continuing to Shkodra, where there is time for a short orientation tour before we make our way to our hotel for the night.

Day 5 DEPART SHKODRA
In the early morning we leave Shkodra for the short journey to Titograd in Yugoslavia, where we board our flight for London.

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